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**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

First Session, 41st Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

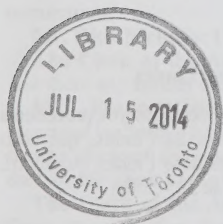
Première session, 41^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 2 July 2014

Mercredi 2 juillet 2014



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 2 July 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 2 juillet 2014

The first day of the first session of the 41st Parliament of the province of Ontario commenced at 1400 pursuant to a proclamation of His Honour David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of the province.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the chamber and took his seat upon the throne.

Hon. David C. Onley (Lieutenant Governor): Pray be seated.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I am commanded by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor to state that he does not see fit to declare the causes of the summoning of the present Legislature of this province until a Speaker of this House shall have been chosen according to law, but tomorrow, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, His Honour will declare the causes of the calling of this Legislature.

His Honour was then pleased to retire.

ELECTION OF SPEAKER ÉLECTION DU PRÉSIDENT

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Members of the Legislative Assembly, it is my duty to call upon you to elect one of your number to preside over your deliberations as Speaker. Therefore, I ask for nominations for the office of Speaker.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Clerk, I move, seconded by Sylvia Jones, that Rick Nicholls, member for the electoral district of Chatham–Kent–Essex, do take the Chair of the House as Speaker.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Does the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex accept the nomination?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I accept.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Are there any further nominations?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I, France Gélinas, move, seconded by Percy Hatfield, that Paul Miller, the member for the electoral district of Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, do take the Chair of the House as Speaker.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Does the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek accept the nomination?

Mr. Paul Miller: I accept, Madam Clerk, and thanks to the nominators.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Are there any further nominations?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I, Laura Albanese, move, seconded by Lorenzo Berardinetti, that Shafiq Qaadri, member for the electoral district of Etobicoke North, do take the Chair of the House as Speaker.

Je, Laura Albanese, propose, appuyée par Lorenzo Berardinetti, que Shafiq Qaadri, député de la circonscription d'Etobicoke-Nord, prenne le fauteuil en tant que Président de l'Assemblée législative.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Does the member for Etobicoke North accept the nomination?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: J'accepte la nomination. Thank you. I accept the nomination.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Are there any further nominations?

Ms. Soo Wong: I, Soo Wong, move, seconded by Bob Delaney, that Dave Levac, member for the electoral district of Brant, do take the Chair of the House as Speaker.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Does the member for Brant accept the nomination?

Mr. Dave Levac: I accept.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Are there any further nominations?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I, Peter Tabuns, move, seconded by Teresa Armstrong, that Cheri DiNovo, member for the electoral district of Parkdale–High Park, do take the Chair of the House as Speaker.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Does the member for Parkdale–High Park accept the nomination?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I do accept.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Are there any further nominations? There being no further nominations, I declare the nominations closed. We'll now prepare the voting list.

I'd ask the Sergeant to please verify that the ballot box is empty.

1410

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The candidates list has been posted, and the balloting will begin. I would ask all members to please process down to that end of the chamber, around and behind the benches, to pick up their ballots.

1422

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Have all members who wished to vote done so? Balloting is then closed. I'd ask the Sergeant to take the ballot box. Would the scrutineers for each caucus follow the Clerks.

Honourable members, when the ballot has been counted, we will cause the bells to ring for five minutes to call you back into the chamber for the results.

1433

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Call in the members.

1438

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Honourable members, we have need of a second ballot. The candidates remaining on the ballot, in alphabetical order, are: the member for Brant, Mr. Levac; the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, Mr. Miller; the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex, Mr. Nicholls; and the member for Etobicoke North, Mr. Qaadri.

Sergeant, will you verify that the ballot box is empty?

The second ballot is now open. Please collect your ballots.

1450

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Have all members who wish to vote done so? The second ballot is closed. Sergeant, please take the box.

Would the scrutineers please follow the Clerks?

1502

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Call in the members.

1507

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Members please take their seats.

A third ballot is required. Candidates will be listed in alphabetical order as follows: Mr. Levac, Brant; Mr. Miller, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek; Mr. Nicholls, Chatham–Kent–Essex.

Sergeant, would you check the ballot box?

The third ballot is now open.

1518

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Have all members who wish to vote done so? I declare the third ballot closed.

Sergeant?

1527

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Call in the members.

1532

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Members please take their seats.

Honourable members, it is my duty to declare that the member for the electoral district of Brant, Mr. Levac, has been elected as Speaker.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you very much.

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —we won't have to fit him for a suit.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I gained weight during the election.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I noticed.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member is warned.

I am extremely humbled, and I thank you so much for the vote of confidence.

I first want to start, obviously, by naming the people who put their names forward: Rick, Cheri, Paul, Shafiq. Thank you for putting your names forward for this beautiful place.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Something is going on right now called the Beautiful Game; this is the beautiful place. It represents who we are as a province.

I'm humbled by having this opportunity to serve you. I can't do it without my family: my wife, Rosemarie; my daughter Rachel; and my son, Joe—I believe my son was Skyping illegally in the House; I'm not sure. Thank you so much for the support.

Another person who quietly does things behind the scenes who I think everyone knows is Gloria.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): For those who haven't heard the story, we are going to write a book when she retires and when I retire, and it's called *Speakers I've Known*. She has served 15 Speakers.

Speaking of Speakers, in the House today we have a guest who I believe deserves our attention: Mr. Peter Milliken. Peter.

A guest of the member from Kingston and the Islands, the Honourable Peter Milliken served as the 34th Speaker of the House of Commons from January 29, 2001, to June 2, 2011—the longest-serving Speaker in the Commons in Canadian history. I will say this to you and to the members: I have no intention of setting that record.

To each and every one of you, congratulations. And to all of you, I will do my humble best to serve this great place and to respect your rights as individual members. Thank you very much.

The government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn until 2 p.m. tomorrow, July 3, 2014.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Naqvi has moved that the House do now adjourn until 2 p.m. tomorrow, July 3, 2014. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until 2 p.m. tomorrow, July 3, 2014.

The House adjourned at 1538.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Samia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiles, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Cimino, Joe (NDP)	Sudbury	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina Bento (LIB)	Davenport	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Halton Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Interim Leader, Official Opposition / Chef par intérim de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Interim Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef par intérim de Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Premier / Première ministre
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Vacant	Thornhill	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 3 July 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 3 juillet 2014

The House met at 1400.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the chamber and took his seat upon the throne.

Hon. David C. Onley (Lieutenant Governor): Pray be seated.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): May it please Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly has elected me as their Speaker, though I am but little able to fulfill the important duties thus assigned to me. If, in the performance of those duties, I should at any time fall into error, I pray that the fault may be imputed to me and not to the assembly, whose servant I am and who, through me, the better to enable them to discharge their duty to their Queen and country, hereby claim all their undoubted rights and privileges, especially that they have freedom of speech in their debates, access to your person at all sensible times, and that their proceedings may receive from you the most favourable consideration.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I am commanded by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor to declare to you that he freely confides in the duty and attachment of the assembly to Her Majesty's person and government, and, not doubting that the proceedings will be conducted with wisdom, temperance and prudence, he grants and upon all occasions will recognize and allow the constitutional privileges.

I am commanded also to assure you that the assembly shall have ready access to His Honour upon all suitable occasions and that their proceedings, as well as your words and actions, will constantly receive from him the most favourable construction.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor was pleased to open the session by reading the speech from the throne.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Hon. David C. Onley (Lieutenant Governor): Mr. Speaker, Madam Clerk, Premier, former Premier McGuinty—with whom I still disagree as to which Ontario team shall win the Stanley Cup first—and honourable members of the Legislature, before I begin the reading of my last speech from the throne as Lieutenant Governor, I just wanted to say that I have greatly appreciated your collective support and individual support, in many ways, large and small, of my office over the last seven years.

We have a unique form of government, in which we all play different roles, yet despite its deficiencies it is still quite a remarkable system, and it serves us well. So

let us guard it with dedication and determination. It has been a privilege to be part of that process with you.

Applause.

Hon. David C. Onley (Lieutenant Governor): Mr. Speaker, honourable members, all people of Ontario.

We open the 41st Parliament of Ontario acknowledging the rich history of aboriginal peoples in Ontario, whose contributions to our great province go back centuries, well before the first European settlers and certainly well before the first sitting of this House. It is on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit that we gather for today's time-honoured tradition, and to reaffirm your government's commitment to aboriginal peoples and to all people, as it builds Ontario up, and creates more opportunity and more security for every citizen in every region.

As the representative of Her Majesty the Queen, I bring greetings and extend warm congratulations to all 107 members of this assembly. You take your places today to give voice to Ontario's wonderfully diverse peoples and regions.

We can all share enormous pride in the changing face of representation in our Parliament, its developing balance in gender equality and racial diversity. Ontario's 41st Parliament reflects the election of more women to this chamber than any Ontario Parliament before it, and your government is led by the first female Premier elected in the history of this province. The 107 members of this Legislative Assembly bring a diversity of backgrounds and experiences that is truly representative of Ontario's greatest strength—its people.

In this context, it is my privilege to deliver this speech from the throne from your newly re-elected government.

J'ai l'honneur de présenter le discours du trône de votre gouvernement récemment réélu.

Your government believes that of Ontario's many advantages, none is greater than its people: your talent and skills, your compassion and competitiveness, your depth, diversity and unfailing support for one another.

And so today, I speak to you—wherever you are in Ontario and wherever you came from to be here—I speak to you on behalf of your government to share how it will move Ontario forward in the days and years ahead.

Since it last addressed this chamber from the throne, your government invited all Ontarians into an open discussion that has shaped a plan for our province's future. It is a way forward that promises more opportunity and builds more security for all Ontarians in this 21st century economy.

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Your government brought forward a plan designed to grow the economy and support all people of the province by investing in education and the skills training necessary for new growth; a plan that builds better public transit in congested cities and better roads to connect towns with rural and remote communities; a plan that creates good job opportunities for today's workforce by fostering partnerships with the private sector and guarantees financial security for those leaving the workforce by creating stronger pensions; a plan carefully balanced to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18 in a fair and responsible manner; and a plan to open up government with increased transparency and more accountability.

Vous avez confié à votre gouvernement le mandat de jouer un rôle positif dans votre vie, de contribuer activement au bien-être de la population et des collectivités de la province.

With this plan, your government asked you to affirm the positive role it can play. My fellow Ontarians, by putting in place a stable government with a practical plan to help you succeed, you have given your answer. You have entrusted your government to be a force for good—a full and active participant in your communities and in your lives.

Your government knows that trust is hard-earned, but easily lost. And so it will work each and every day to keep your trust by meeting its commitments to you.

To deliver its balanced and comprehensive plan, your government will lead from the activist centre. This is what you asked of your government, and it is where government must be to engage all Ontarians as full partners.

This means your government will implement its plan by convening people first, instead of directing them. It will not invite your questions only after decisions are taken, but as decisions are made. Your government will put evidence before ideology and choose partnership over partisanship.

This is how your government will solve the challenges we face as individuals, as communities, as businesses and as a province.

Consider the challenges: an economy with great potential but still not operating at full capacity; families unable to save enough for retirement; young people getting the education, but not the job that matches; roads that are congested, slowing goods, people and growth; climate change that is already having an impact on our lives, creating severe weather events that affect us all.

Ontario's economic recovery is real, but fragile, and therefore, by no means certain. My fellow Ontarians, your government invites you to work together, with and through government, to overcome these challenges and to thrive.

Your government's top priority is to grow the economy and create good jobs in every region of the province. Ontarians seek good jobs not as ends unto themselves, but as the means by which we can achieve our goals and do more for ourselves and for our families. Likewise,

good jobs and a growing economy allow government to do more for all families and for all people.

This is why your government's economic plan embraces strategic public investments that generate lasting benefits for people, families and communities. It is why your government will not limit its economic action to businesses alone. Your government's efforts to lift children out of poverty, send more young people on to post-secondary education and help businesses become more globally competitive are all part of the same equation, because together they add up to more opportunity, more security and more economic growth. Your health, your children's education, your chance at a second career, your town's biggest employer or your community's smallest legal aid provider—all are the necessary foundations for your success and for Ontario's success. All are supported by your government's comprehensive and coherent economic plan.

Last year, Ontario was North America's top destination for foreign direct investment, and our economy added nearly 100,000 jobs. With consumer and business confidence on the rise and a forecast of accelerating growth, there is no doubt Ontario is recovering from the global recession. Your government is at work sustaining this momentum. Last week, ministers were appointed to a cabinet shaped to address your priorities. As promised, the Legislative Assembly was called back just 20 days after the provincial election. And provided that the debate on this speech from the throne is completed, on July 14, your government will reintroduce the budget originally tabled in this chamber on May 1 and ask that the assembly move quickly to pass it.

Your government's jobs agenda is a people's agenda. It includes an ambitious goal for Ontario to become North America's leading jurisdiction for talent, skills and training. International businesses come here and local businesses grow here because of the talent and the dedication of our workforce. This great strength combines well with our geography and the unique global reach that our increasingly diverse workforce underpins.

With wage increases planned for early childhood educators and the province-wide availability of full-day kindergarten this fall, your government is ensuring that every child in Ontario has the best possible start in life. It will implement Achieving Excellence, a plan to take public education in Ontario from great to excellent by continually improving learning, so that young people are prepared to lead in the global economy.

As more young people graduate high school, your government will ensure that opportunities are available to them. It will continue to provide the 30% Off Ontario Tuition grant, so that every year as many as 260,000 young people can afford that all-important first degree or diploma.

To ensure that there are as many spaces as there are talented, ambitious young people, your government will build new campuses.

Pour s'assurer que tous les jeunes talentueux et ambitieux puissent faire des études, votre gouvernement

améliorera l'accès aux programmes offerts en français pour les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes.

Your government will introduce Experience Ontario, a new program to give recent high school graduates valuable work experience before they choose their path in life. The youth jobs strategy, which is being extended to help connect more young people to promising careers, and the largest apprenticeship system in Ontario's history, will both remain central to your government's investment in opportunities for youth.

Your government's focus on the talent and skills of its people recognizes the value of public sector work as well. Indeed, developing the talent and skills of our people requires excellent early childhood educators, teachers, educational assistants and post-secondary instructors. These and other public sector jobs are good, knowledge-based jobs. Public sector workers tend to our sick, nurture our young, protect us and build us up in all facets of life. Your government unconditionally rejects the argument that the only jobs that matter are private sector jobs.

Public investments to develop the talent and skills of our people are not a luxury. They are investments that keep our industries on the sharp edge of innovation and pay dividends today and tomorrow. They are central pieces of your government's economic plan.

The second part of your government's economic plan for Ontario is an historic investment in modern infrastructure, particularly in transit and transportation. Your government will spend more than \$130 billion on public infrastructure over the next decade—on new hospitals, schools, undergraduate campuses, safer roads, better public transit and all-day, two-way GO Regional Express Rail—all to support sustainable economic growth across Ontario.

For decades, investments in Ontario's transportation system did not keep pace with growth. Accordingly, your government will dedicate a new, \$29-billion investment toward Moving Ontario Forward, a 10-year transit and transportation strategy, which will create jobs and grow our economy right now and well into the future. Moving Ontario Forward will transparently allocate up to \$15 billion towards projects in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area and nearly \$14 billion towards projects elsewhere in Ontario, where the guaranteed movement of people and goods is fundamental to growth.

To firmly seize this once-in-a-generation opportunity and build a seamless, province-wide transportation network, your government will work with municipalities, local governments, transit agencies, citizens and experts. Your government will also engage the federal government as a partner in supporting its transit strategy and those of the other provinces.

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Public investment in infrastructure is a critical element of your government's economic plan. It is an investment your government can make right away that pays dividends and creates jobs today and tomorrow. Former

Bank of Canada governor David Dodge agrees that “with low interest rates, it is the right time for governments and the private sector to invest in infrastructure.”

Votre gouvernement va aussi continuer à favoriser un climat favorable au milieu d'affaires en Ontario.

Ontario's dynamic business climate starts with a great strength—a diversified economy that helps manage the highs and lows of commodity, sector and currency cycles. It is sustained by a competitive and predictable corporate tax rate, which is lower than those of competing jurisdictions.

Ontarians know that in the global competition for investment, government needs to be a partner with business. Your government will partner by pursuing more trade missions, because increased exports are the clearest path to sustainable, continuous economic growth. This will include trade missions led by the Premier to other countries, including China, this fall.

Your government will also create partnerships through the Jobs and Prosperity Fund, so that communities across Ontario can win the global competition for jobs. This new fund will help to create good jobs in traditional and emerging industries and bring much needed investment to regions still recovering from the impact of the global recession. Sectors such as advanced manufacturing and automotive, agri-food, information and communications technology, natural resources, tourism, media and culture will benefit.

A changing economy means a changing workplace. Your government will engage with Ontarians to consider what it can do in the context of our labour and employment law regime to continue to protect workers while supporting business in today's modern economy.

Through partnerships with business and persons with disabilities, your government will work to increase the number of employment opportunities for Ontarians of all abilities, and your government will continue to work with its partners to build a fully accessible Ontario by 2025.

Fiscal responsibility is essential to securing Ontario's dynamic and innovative business climate. Accordingly, your government will make strategic investments while eliminating the deficit and reducing its debt burden in a responsible and sustainable manner. The commitment to eliminate the deficit in three years is unwavering.

Your government will introduce legislation to raise revenues by asking the top 2% of income earners to pay a little bit more. At the same time, there will be no increase in the HST, the gas tax or the personal income taxes of middle-class workers. Your government will not add to the financial pressures Ontario families face as the recovery takes hold.

Votre gouvernement est résolu à ne pas alourdir le fardeau financier des familles ontariennes au moment où l'économie reprend de la vigueur.

Already, your government spends less per capita on programs than any other province, while providing high-quality public services. In all areas, including health care and education, your government will continue to manage spending wisely. It will not allocate new money for

compensation increases and it will get more value from the assets it owns.

To ensure that the government stays on track to reach its fiscal targets, your government has created the new position of President of the Treasury Board. The President of the Treasury Board will work closely with the Minister of Finance, the Premier, Treasury Board members, and cabinet, and be responsible for overseeing labour relations between the government and the Ontario public service and broader public sector. In this capacity, the president will lead your government's oversight of crown agencies, boards and commissions, and through action and deed, lead the government towards more accountability, openness and modernization. With the new President of the Treasury Board, your government will stay on a path to balance that protects vital public services.

As citizens of Canada, Ontarians want all parts of our country to grow and prosper, and we are proud to live and work in a province that is a net financial contributor to Confederation. The people of Ontario also expect and deserve to be treated fairly by their federal government.

La population de l'Ontario s'attend à être traitée de façon équitable par le gouvernement fédéral, et mérite de l'être.

Independent analysts such as the Mowat Centre and the federal Parliamentary Budget Office have found that Ontario's share of federal fiscal transfers falls short by \$1.2 billion this year alone. Your government will continue to insist on fair fiscal transfers from the federal government, and calls on all members of this Legislature to join forces in standing up for the people of Ontario.

Your government is best able to deliver results when all orders of government are working co-operatively and collaboratively. That is why it joined all provincial governments in asking for federal partnership to consider enhancing the Canada Pension Plan. Experts warn that many Canadians are not able to save enough for retirement, but Canada Pension Plan payments alone are not enough for a secure retirement.

Enhancing the Canada Pension Plan would help resolve this crisis nationally. It remains your government's preferred solution. But absent a federal partner, your government will not sit idly by while more Ontarians move towards retirement without the savings they will need to live comfortably.

Your government has already begun work to create an independently managed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. With the co-operation of this House, it will provide Ontarians an additional annual pension payout similar to that of the Canada Pension Plan. Former OMERS CEO Michael Nobrega will lead implementation of the plan. Because this is a national issue, as Ontario moves forward to secure a better pension for your retirement, your government will continue to work with the other provinces.

Better pensions build broader economic confidence. As Larry Fink, head of the world's largest money

manager, BlackRock, has said, "If you have confidence in your retirement, then you can consume more too."

Your government's action to secure your retirement is an area in which national and provincial interests overlap. Both stand to gain from increased retirement savings. The same is true when it comes to supporting key sectors of the Ontario economy. For example, the partnership between Ontario and the federal government to invest in the future of the auto sector at the height of the global recession produced enduring economic benefits for Ontario and Canada.

On all matters of both national and provincial significance, your government will stand up for the people of Ontario in calling for leadership and partnership from the federal government. But understand: In the absence of a willing federal partner, Ontario will do what is right and necessary. Ontario will lead.

Within the next 60 days, your government will establish a Ring of Fire development corporation and move forward in a smart, sustainable and collaborative way with First Nations, the private sector and communities to unlock the enormous mineral potential in northern Ontario. Your government commits \$1 billion for transportation infrastructure to help access the Ring of Fire.

Your government will continue its efforts to bring the federal government to the table as a willing and active partner, and will seek a matching federal commitment to seize the opportunity for Ontario and Canada that lies in the Ring of Fire.

As it pursues sustainable resource extraction to further the provincial and national interest, your government restates the necessity of protecting our environment for today and tomorrow. Ontario's conservation efforts and clean energy initiatives have moved our province down the road to a sustainable energy future. A growing renewables and energy innovation sector can become an important export industry for our province and our country. It can help to reduce climate change-causing emissions in other areas of Canada's energy sector and elsewhere in the world.

Ontarians are proud to be leaders in the global fight against climate change. The closing of Ontario's coal-fired electricity plants stands as North America's most significant climate change initiative. Your government is encouraged by the United States' newly announced restrictions on coal emissions, but Ontarians know there is more to be done here and around the world.

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Climate change is an overarching concern for this province, as it is for this country and the world. That is why your government is giving responsibilities for climate change to a new Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change.

Increasingly extreme and unpredictable weather hurts farmers, puts pressure on infrastructure, and at the worst of times, robs people of their homes and livelihoods. The new Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change will co-ordinate action across government to limit greenhouse gas emissions and will renew work with com-

munities across Ontario on adaptation to the growing impacts of climate change.

Your government also knows that climate change solutions need to span borders. Ontario will work with other provinces and territories to develop a Canadian energy strategy, which includes co-ordinated efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and which recognizes the important role of renewable energy and energy conservation. While the provinces are leading this effort, your government will encourage federal partnership in addressing this challenge, which is both local and global in scale.

Your government will implement its plans in the same manner they were developed—openly and transparently.

It will bring back to this Legislature the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, which was not passed by the previous Legislature. If passed by the 41st Parliament of Ontario, your government will act to expand oversight of government agencies and the broader public sector. It will require government ministers and their staff to post all expenses. It will give more powers to the Integrity Commissioner to investigate and punish wrongdoing, and strengthen the laws around the retention of government documents.

The Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act will also give your government the power to control compensation of senior executives in the broader public sector. Your government is committed to introducing more oversight and accountability at arm's-length government agencies. This will help ensure tax dollars are spent wisely as it delivers on its firm commitment to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18.

And to ensure that its decisions are always made responsibly, openly and in the best interests of Ontarians, your government will take steps to allow the justice committee to write its report.

Your government will continue to build a fairer and healthier Ontario. It is transforming health care, placing the patient at the centre and making strategic investments in community care to keep people where they want to be: in their home rather than in a hospital. Guided by a promise to provide the right care, in the right place, at the right time, your government will expand home and community care and guarantee every Ontarian a primary care provider.

Your government will place an added focus on community wellness. By expanding the Student Nutrition Program, creating opportunities for all students to participate in 60 minutes of physical activity a day, supporting community hubs, implementing a cycling strategy, and reinforcing these measures with cross-ministry initiatives and a new associate minister's portfolio focused on long-term care and wellness, Ontario will become the healthiest place to live, work and grow old.

Your government's commitment to building a fairer, healthier province will increase the pay for personal support workers over a period of three years, because the very people on whom health system transformation

depends deserve a fair wage; a wage that reflects the quality of care Ontarians rightly expect for themselves and for their loved ones.

Within 60 days, your government will introduce a new poverty reduction strategy. It will build on the gains made with Breaking the Cycle, Ontario's first poverty reduction strategy, which lifted 47,000 children out of poverty and kept many more from falling into it. Already this month, your government has increased the Ontario Child Benefit and through legislation it will introduce, your government aims to index future annual increases to inflation so that low-income families do not fall further behind. To further ensure fairness for workers and their families, legislation to increase Ontario's minimum wage annually at the rate of inflation and to increase protections for vulnerable workers will also come before this House. And your government will expand its Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative and investment in the Affordable Housing Program, increase support for developmental services and increase its investment in the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy.

In my introductory remarks, I acknowledged, as your government often does, that we are gathered on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit. To give full meaning to these words, they must see expression in the practice, policies and actions of your government. That is why your government will build on the success of the historic Matawa Regional Framework Agreement. Your government will continue increasing opportunities for aboriginal peoples through relationships that are built on respect and partnership.

Votre gouvernement a un plan pour faire progresser l'Ontario.

Your government brought you a plan to build Ontario up. Today, the building starts. Building the potential of every child; building new transit and new ways of securing the comfortable retirement everyone deserves; building more competitive industries and more skilled workers than anywhere in the world; building a fair and inclusive society, diverse in talent and experiences, but united in purpose.

And so today, your government asks for your partnership, as it begins the work of building opportunity today and securing the future for all citizens of this vast and inspiring province that everyone calls Ontario, but that only we can proudly call our home.

Thank you. Merci. Meegwetch.

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Singing of O Canada.

His Honour was then pleased to retire.

Prayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Please be seated. I beg to inform the House that to prevent mistakes, I have obtained a copy of the speech from the throne, which I will now read.

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Agreed? Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MOTIONS

AN ACT TO PERPETUATE
AN ANCIENT PARLIAMENTARY RIGHTLOI VISANT À PERPÉTUER
UN ANCIEN DROIT PARLEMENTAIRE

Ms. Wynne moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 1, An Act to perpetuate an ancient parliamentary right / Projet de loi 1, Loi visant à perpétuer un ancien droit parlementaire.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A short comment from the Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Following long-standing tradition, the first bill introduced in the Legislature involves an initiative not mentioned in the speech from the throne. I am pleased to introduce this bill here today.

This practice signifies the assembly's independence from the crown and the collective right of members to address the Legislature's priorities before attending to other business.

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor to this House be taken into consideration on Monday, July 7, 2014.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It doesn't feel like I ever left.

Mr. Naqvi has moved the adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until 10:30 a.m. on Monday, July 7, 2014.

The House adjourned at 1445.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Simcoe–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bento Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiles, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Cimino, Joe (NDP)	Sudbury	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glenarrig–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwalá, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	Thornhill	

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Monday 7 July 2014

Lundi 7 juillet 2014



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 7 July 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 7 juillet 2014

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

MEMBERS' ROLL

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that the Clerk has laid upon the table the roll of members elected at the general election 2014.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I also beg to inform the House that Mr. Wilson, member from the electoral district of Simcoe–Grey, is recognized as the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure this morning to introduce to the House my executive assistant from the great riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex, Mr. Larry Landry. Larry, welcome.

Hon. Bill Mauro: It's my pleasure today to welcome to the Legislature members of the Nature Conservancy of Canada: Ted Ecclestone, chair; Gary Goldberg, vice-chair; and James Duncan, vice-president. We welcome them to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further introduction of guests? The Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and welcome back as Speaker.

I'm very pleased to introduce my big sister, Susan Houghton, and her husband, Roy—great supporters of mine. Susan and Roy, welcome. Please stand up.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I would like to introduce Minister Mike Nixon, who is the Minister of Justice, Attorney General and Minister of Tourism and Culture for the government of Yukon. Welcome.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to introduce my beautiful daughter, Maggie.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'd like to recognize two interns from my ministry who are here today who have been working very hard: Emma Cavatassi and Harrison Wong.

I also would like to recognize a young man who is in the east gallery. His name is C.J. Jayanathan. He's up there; nice to see you, C.J.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'm delighted to also recognize that there are some interns who are joining us here today from my ministry: Charles, A.J. and Jay are here with us.

I also want to acknowledge two additional folks who are in the west public gallery: Najva Amin and Andrea Ernesaks.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Please give a special welcome to the Hébert family, and welcome back our former page Jasper Hébert, who is here with the rest of the Hébert family to see the current page in their family do her job: his sister Emma.

Mr. Han Dong: I would like to introduce two very important people who are in the members' gallery: my parents, Huimin Dong and Ling Di Wang, and their friends from New Jersey in the United States, Leo Wang and Shu Wang. Welcome.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'd like to welcome members of the Nature Conservancy of Canada, as well as George Paisiovich. He's a familiar face here; he's the president of Stakeholder Relations. There will be a reception in room 230 from 11 till 2 this afternoon, and I'm sure all are welcome to attend.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Jim Wilson: Mr. Speaker, may I begin by congratulating you on your re-election as Speaker in this chamber. Congratulations and best wishes. Also, Premier, congratulations to you and your government: an historic win, as you are the first female Premier in the province of Ontario, a fact that we are all proud of, and best wishes, but not too many best wishes.

My question is for the Premier. Premier, your throne speech promises another \$5.7 billion worth of new programs with money we don't have, racking up a record \$12.5-billion deficit. Irresponsible, unaccountable spending will never lead to balancing the budget and getting Ontario's economy growing again.

According to economist Jack Mintz, "if interest rates which have been at 20-year low levels rise, [the debt] burden would become significantly heavier," and "if interest rates rise to [even] historical norms, each point increase in interest could add a minimum of \$3-billion in annual interest payments. That would severely cripple Ontario's ability to deliver services."

Premier, you claim you will eliminate the deficit in three years, yet you're promising to spend billions more

in new money—taxpayers' money. Will you commit today to complete openness and transparency as you implement your plan with billions in new spending?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, too, want to congratulate you on your re-election as Speaker, and I want to congratulate the member for Simcoe–Grey for his position as the Leader of the Opposition. Congratulations to all of the members of the House, and to all of the candidates who put their names on a ballot and ran, I want to say thank you for taking part in the democratic process. Thank you very much.

I want to answer the last part of the Leader of the Opposition's question first by saying that, yes, we intend to and we will operate in a very transparent manner. We will conduct business in a very open way. I think that as we reintroduce pieces of legislation, Mr. Speaker, particularly the accountability act, it will be obvious that that is the way we want to operate.

But I also want to say to both the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the third party that it is our intention and it is our responsibility to operate in a collaborative way, so where there are possibilities of finding the best answer to questions of serious public policy in Ontario, we want to draw on ideas from all sides of the House. That is our responsibility as government, and we take it very seriously.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Well, Premier, my colleagues and I here on the opposition side are concerned that this government spending spree will dig us into such a deep hole that someday we won't be able to afford the basic things we all care about, like health care and education. As you know, Moody's credit rating agency changed Ontario's debt rating outlook from stable to negative. A credit downgrade would increase our borrowing costs, taking money out of the front-line services we all depend on. Already, 40 nursing positions have been cut in North Bay, 90 nurses have been put out of work in Ottawa, and you fired 34 nurses in Windsor.

Premier, will you do the honourable thing and tell Ontarians what further front-line services you're going to cut in order to meet your budget targets, or are you simply going to pass the buck on to future generations with the debt burden?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I fundamentally disagree with the premise of the question that the Leader of the Opposition has put forward. First of all, I think he knows full well that there are more than 20,000 new nurses in Ontario since we came into office in 2003, net new positions, so there are thousands of new nurses.

What we are doing, Mr. Speaker, is we are transforming the system. That is what is necessary. We have a plan to build Ontario up, and that's where the fundamental disagreement is. We know that the investments that are necessary right now will lead to that future economic growth. We know that the transformations and the investments in health care today will lead to the excellence in health care that we need today and tomorrow. Those in-

vestments in training and in skills, the investments in infrastructure, including hospitals and schools, roads and bridges and transit—those are the things that need to be done now in order to build the province up.

1040

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Premier, this crisis is yours. This was born out of your Liberal government's inability to make the tough decisions and get Ontario's finances under control. But for years you've sat on your hands and you've even continually made matters worse.

Again, Jack Mintz has said, "Ontario is sagging under the weight of monstrous public debt, uncompetitive energy prices and rising taxes."

You've ignored your financial mess for too long, and now Ontario families are left holding the bag for your poor management and refusal to get a grip on the province's finances.

Premier, just be honest. You've started with cuts to physiotherapy services for seniors and firing nurses. What other front-line services are you going to cut or what taxes are you going to increase?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure exactly whether the Leader of the Opposition is asking for more spending or less spending.

Here's the reality: We are providing more physiotherapy services. We are providing better home care services. We are transforming the health care system. But most importantly, we are making sure that we don't begin this next phase of Ontario's economic history by cutting 100,000 jobs, by cutting services.

What we are doing is we are investing in the services that we know people need, that affect their quality of life. We are investing in their talent and their skills and those of their children and grandchildren. We are investing in the roads and the bridges and the transit systems that they will need. I would hope that we will have the support of the opposition, because they know full well that in every community across Ontario, those services and those investments are necessary.

HEALTH CARE

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is to the Minister of Health. Congratulations, Minister, on your new appointment.

London hospital emergency room wait times are among the worst in the province. The provincial average for complex conditions wait times in an emergency room is 9.9 hours. However, at University Hospital the wait time in the emergency room for complex conditions is 19 hours. At the London Health Sciences Centre Victoria Hospital, the wait time for complex conditions is 12.6 hours. Minister, why are London's emergency room wait times so far above the provincial average?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. Clearly, there is a problem at this hospital. We're working with the hospital to decrease the ER wait times.

But I'm proud that we measure wait times, which the previous government, in terms of many aspects of health care services, did not even measure. We not only measure them, but we've made considerable progress right across the province in reducing the wait times for ER, and reducing the wait times for important surgical procedures in the province. In fact, in 2008—five years ago—we launched a coordinated and very comprehensive strategy to do just what the member opposite is asking: to tackle our ER wait times, working with health care professionals right across the province to make sure that we continue to make progress. We are making progress.

With the particular institution referenced, there's clearly much, much more work that needs to be done.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Simply measuring the wait times doesn't do it; you actually have to do something about it.

In fact, this past winter, the emergency room wait times were so bad that the London hospitals told people to stay away from the emergency rooms unless it was absolutely necessary.

But there is an answer here: 30 kilometres down the road, the emergency room at St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital has some of the lowest wait times in the province. St. Thomas has some of the best patient management systems in Ontario, and they're very efficient at moving patients through the system. St. Thomas's CEO, Paul Collins, believes this system is transferable to all London hospitals.

Minister, will you commit to implementing the system used at St. Thomas Elgin hospital to all London-area hospital emergency rooms?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm sure even the member opposite will acknowledge that the situation in those two jurisdictions is different.

But I want to talk to her and mention that I'm proud that ER wait times across the province have gone down 12% in Ontario over the last five years. In fact, ER wait times for the sickest patients who show up in our ERs have gone down by 29.3%, while at the same time volumes for those sickest individuals have increased by 39%. So we've made tremendous progress there, to the point where nine out of every 10 patients who are treated in our ERs are treated within the target times—85% of complex patients within eight hours of arriving in our ERs, and 89% of uncomplicated patients are seen and treated within four hours.

We've made tremendous progress. Clearly there's more work to be done, including in individual hospitals; we are doing that work.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Mr. Speaker, London's head of emergency medicine, Dr. Gary Joubert, was quoted as saying, "We're not as terrible as the provincial numbers indicate." Really? Minister, that's a pretty low bar. "Not as terrible" doesn't give a lot of comfort to people who need emergency room services in London.

You've indicated that you realize there are two very different operating systems. The St. Thomas hospital has a great system. Will you commit today, Minister, to implementing the same system used at the St. Thomas hospital in all of the London hospitals? It clearly works. Why wouldn't you do it?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Again, Mr. Speaker, we look everywhere for good advice on how we can continue to reduce the ER wait times. I want to say as well, specific to London Health Sciences, that we have provided them with over \$1 million recently to help them reduce their ER wait times even further.

Part of our plan, of course, is to transition out those individuals who can be better cared for outside of hospital, because one of the challenges with our ER wait times is that there may not be beds for those individuals who have complex problems to go into immediately.

As we move people out of hospitals, we can move people from our ERs into that; that will open up ER time. We're working closely, obviously, with London Health Sciences. We see that more progress needs to be made. We'll work hard until we're proud of the results, and the people in that jurisdiction of London will be proud of the results too.

ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, on behalf of New Democrats, I want to begin by congratulating you on your election, the Premier on her election and the forming of government, all the MPPs on their election to this place, as well as those candidates who ran in this campaign; it was an exciting campaign. I wanted to extend my congratulations.

My question, of course, is to the Premier. The Premier spent the recent election campaign denouncing Conservative plans to fire 100,000 public sector workers. Can she explain why Don Drummond says that that's exactly what her plan will do?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want to especially congratulate the new members, the new NDP members, on their run and for being here in the House.

I have to say I'm somewhat concerned about the rhetoric that I'm hearing from the leader of the NDP. It sounds like she is looking for an excuse for why she didn't support our budget. She knows perfectly well that the investments we put forward in our budget are necessary to the people of Ontario. She knows that investing in people's talent and skills and investing in infrastructure, including transit and roads and bridges—she knows that that's necessary, and she knows that an Ontario retirement pension plan is what is needed in the absence of the federal government stepping up to enhance the CPP.

I hope that she will support those initiatives that we are putting forward. She knows full well that the people of Ontario need them and support them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I would actually hope that the Premier would respond to my question, so I'm going to put it again.

When the Conservatives introduced a plan to fire 100,000 people, the Premier called that plan “disastrous.” Does the Premier think the message voters sent is that they don’t want the Conservatives to fire 100,000 people, but it’s okay for the Liberals to fire 100,000 people?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the leader of the third party is looking for some reason, anywhere she can find it, to justify why she didn’t support our budget.

She talks about comments made by Mr. Drummond. She knows perfectly well that that is not what he said. She knows perfectly well that our plan is not premised on firing 100,000 people. That was the Conservatives’ plan.

It’s interesting, because the NDP leader based her plan on the same fiscal targets that we had put out, except that she said she’d find \$600 million more. So in fact she knows full well that it is not our intention to fire people. She knows full well that our plan is premised on building people up, building up the province, including the infrastructure and the talent and skills of the people of this province.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Be seated, please.

Final supplementary.

1050

Ms. Andrea Horwath: You know, the government seems intent on reintroducing their Trojan Horse budget despite the fact that people have rejected austerity and mass—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. Order. Please finish.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Economists are telling people to brace for the worst because there are major gaps in the government’s fiscal plan that have not been explained. Will the Premier come clean with Ontarians and tell them to brace for the worst?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We have been very upfront with the people of Ontario. We have said that there are challenges confronting us. There is no doubt about that. We have said that there are constraints that we have to keep in place. We have said that there is no new money for collective agreements as we go into negotiations. We have said quite clearly that the kinds of changes that we have been making in the health care system—the changes in the delivery of service, putting more services in the community—need to continue.

But for the leader of the third party to stand up now, when she based her plan on exactly the same fiscal foundation as we did, and to distance herself from that is ridiculous. The fact is, we know that there are challenges ahead, but we also know that we must make the investments that are necessary in order to build this province up and to help this economy grow. That’s what people expect.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier. Last week, Moody’s changed their outlook on

Ontario’s credit rating to negative after the government said it would reintroduce the same budget. Does the Premier accept that anyone who has taken a look at the numbers behind the Liberal plan sees that there is a major gap?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We laid out a path to balancing our budget. What we ran on, what we said that we were going to do and what we are doing is reintroducing a plan that will keep us on target to balance the budget and eliminate the deficit by 2017-18. And we will make the investments now that we know are necessary in order for the province to thrive.

And with all due respect to the leader of the third party, I would have expected that she would understand by now that people want those investments and that people believe that those investments are necessary. They know, because they live in their communities, that their kids need those supports, that their communities and their businesses need those supports. I would have thought she would have heard that.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Be seated, please.

Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Does the Premier at least accept that in the wake of the downgrade, the negative outlook from Moody’s, the Liberal plan suffers from a serious credibility gap?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We have been crystal clear that in order to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18, there will be difficult decisions. I’ve been clear and the Minister of Finance has been clear that, for example, there is no new money for collective agreements. We know that those rounds of collective bargaining will be challenging, but we’ve been crystal clear about that. Everyone went into this with their eyes wide open. We know that there will have to be changes in the way we deliver services. Some of those changes are already under way, particularly in the health care system.

But that does not negate the fact that there need to be investments in this province. That does not negate the fact that kids need full-day kindergarten, that seniors need services in health care, that more home care is necessary, that we must have personal support workers who are paid adequately and that people with developmental services need support. Those are the things that we know need investment right now.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, when is the Premier of this province going to level with Ontarians about the cuts, the layoffs and the asset sales they can expect to see from this government’s Trojan Horse budget?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, anyone who has read the budget knows that we referenced every one of those issues and how we will take them on. For example, on assets, what we have said is that we believe those assets that are in the hands of government,

which belong to the people of Ontario, should work for the people of Ontario to the very, very optimal degree—which is why we've asked Ed Clark to take on the challenge of making sure those assets work.

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I hear heckling from the opposition. Had there been a process in place when the 407 was being considered, had we had that asset work for us, I'll bet it would not have been sold and we wouldn't have lost those billions of dollars.

We're taking a rational approach. We're going to make sure that the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario work for the people of Ontario, and we are going to make the investments in services that we know people need. I hope that the third party will join us in support of those.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): New question? The member from Leeds–Grenville.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Be seated, please. Order.

The member from Leeds–Grenville.

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Congratulations on your re-election. My question, through you, is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Minister, congratulations on your re-election and your appointment to cabinet.

In just a little over a week, the Kemptville College Renewal Task Force will convene a public meeting to discuss potential partnerships to provide and ensure core agriculture education programs continue to be offered in eastern Ontario. What the ag community wants from you is your assurance that you and your government will work with any partner with a plan to deliver those programs that comes out of that public meeting.

Will you give that assurance to us today?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member from Leeds–Grenville for the question this morning. There is no question in my mind that both Kemptville and Alfred play significant roles in the agricultural community in eastern Ontario. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in my riding of Peterborough, I have a number of alumni, particularly from the Kemptville college. They've been calling me consistently over the last little while. We're looking at ways to foster partnerships in both those communities, at Kemptville and Alfred, because we know their importance.

We do know that the Honourable Lyle Vancief will be doing an extensive review of Kemptville, and Marc Godbout will be doing an extensive community review of Alfred.

I look forward to working with the member from Leeds–Grenville and my colleague from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell as we move forward with a plausible plan both for Kemptville and for Alfred.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Steve Clark: Minister, this is a very simple answer. It's a yes or no answer.

Interjections.

Mr. Steve Clark: Well, there is.

Several partners, including the municipality of North Grenville, have stepped up to be part of the solution. Others are going to be revealed at that public meeting next week. Can you assure us that your facilitator will implement our community's plan with any potential partner that comes out in that meeting? Are you committed to Kemptville? Are you going to force your vision of Kemptville on that facilitator or are you going to allow him to listen to the community and work with the task force?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member for the supplementary. We'll be working very carefully with all the potential partners in those areas. We have appointed two very distinguished Canadians to help us with the review: the Honourable Lyle Vancief, who was a very, very distinguished Minister of Agriculture for Prime Minister Chrétien, and Marc Godbout, who has extensive agricultural credentials in eastern Ontario.

1100

One of the things that I learned in almost 30 years in public life serving the great folks of Peterborough is that you need to listen very carefully. Over the next number of weeks and months, I'll be listening very carefully to the people in the Kemptville area and the people in the Alfred area to come up with the right solution, a sustainable solution for those wonderful agricultural institutions in eastern Ontario.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Ms. Catherine Fife: This question is to the Premier. In addition to Moody's, Standard and Poor's also has a negative outlook for Ontario's credit rating. As you know, our credit rating is important because it can impact our ability to invest in education and health care, key ideas in the activist centre.

With two agencies shifting to a negative outlook, the risk of a downgrade is growing, and it shouldn't be ignored. What is the government doing to restore confidence in the province's public finances?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the question. Congratulations to the member for being the critic for finance. I certainly offer an opportunity to meet with you, so I can go over some of the issues as they may pertain to the portfolio.

We recognize that it's important to continue to invest in the things that make us competitive in the long term, recognizing that we will control spending. In fact, we are the lowest-cost government in Canada because of the measures that we've taken. We are the leanest government. We are the only government to have actually cut spending year over year. We've adopted over 80% of Don Drummond's recommendations, and we're continuing to find savings in the system by appointing a new

President of the Treasury Board, whose mandate it is to provide for those negotiations going forward and to find even greater savings in the system. That is how we're going to get to our path to balance, but an important part of that balance is ensuring that we grow our economy and invest in those initiatives that will enable us to grow our revenue by growing the economy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I appreciate the invitation to meet with the Minister of Finance, and also the minister of the Treasury Board. I look forward to working with you as well, but there are some realities that we're going to have to face together at a time when ratings agencies have Ontario on a negative outlook.

"A shot across the bow": That's how they've described this fiscal situation in the province of Ontario. The government's plan is still moving ahead. It will worsen our fiscal situation by opening new tax loopholes for corporations and exempting them from paying HST on entertaining clients and buying luxury cars. This is not a priority for the people of the province of Ontario.

At a time when Ontario is under fiscal pressure, why is the government intent on opening up new tax loopholes for corporations? This does not make sense.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I reject the premise of the question, because that is not the case.

What is important is for us to ensure that we find ways to grow the revenue by growing our economy. We're looking at all ways by which we can secure greater stability in our economy, and we do that by not taking extreme measures. We must also recognize that in order for us to balance the books, we must control our spending, but also invest in those things that will make us competitive.

You reference something that is not opening up any tax loopholes. They are existing, and they require support with the federal government. That is why we're taking steps to look at the underground economy and other efforts by which to grow our revenue—things that exist and that we can improve upon. We are taking measures, and we are looking at ways that Quebec has gone in terms of the underground economy. That will help us capture and grow revenue in that case, as well.

But, as also mentioned, we've just appointed Ed Clark to look at our assets, to maximize the opportunity to increase our dividends through those crown corporations, all of which will help, again, to balance our budget by 2017-18, for which we're on track.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Daiene Vernile: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. Our province has made strategic investments in innovation hubs which are helping today's entrepreneurs become tomorrow's global leaders. That type of investment is key, especially in supporting cluster development and regional economies.

We see this in Kitchener-Waterloo. We see it in the greater Ottawa area, Durham and the GTA, where we

have some of the world's cutting-edge innovation parks, including MaRS, right across the street from here.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please provide the House with some information on how MaRS is creating good jobs for the province of Ontario?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I want to thank the member for Kitchener Centre for being the first new member in this new Legislature to ask a question in this Legislature. It's a good question.

It's important to understand that this government has recognized the need for Ontario to build on its strengths: our people and our partnerships. MaRS is focused on building Canada's next generation of technology companies and accelerating these firms to the status of global market leaders.

MaRS is globally recognized as one of North America's largest urban research parks. It is home to more than 115 tenants from across the innovation spectrum and is where about 2,500 people work every day. Over 1,400 start-up companies have been incubated or advised at MaRS since its inception. In 2013 alone, MaRS venture clients created more than 6,500 jobs. In total, Mr. Speaker, MaRS clients have generated more than \$3 billion in economic activity.

This government believes in supporting a dynamic and innovative business climate, and MaRS is a key part to doing that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you to the minister for his answer. There is no doubt about the importance of this kind of investment in our province in creating cluster development and helping to fortify our regional economies.

As the minister detailed in his answer, MaRS has definitely had a very positive effect on these regional economies and our economy as a whole.

However, in recent weeks we have read a number of stories about the future of MaRS phase 2. I understand that decisions about the future of the MaRS phase 2 building were not made during the writ process. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, could the minister please provide us with an update on what, if any, decisions he has made about MaRS phase 2?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Again, Mr. Speaker, it's a very, very good and pertinent question. I think it's really important.

We all have a responsibility to do our due diligence to ensure the next steps of MaRS phase 2 are carried out with the utmost respect for transparency and taxpayers' dollars.

At this moment, let me be very clear: No decisions have been made. Before any decision is made, I'm making the commitment to solicit the best advice and expertise from industry on how to proceed.

The matter the member refers to does have significant complexity to it. I'm currently in the process of reviewing all options for MaRS phase 2. I can assure the member that I'm looking at the matter closely and will ensure that any decisions that are made will be done as transparently as possible.

The government's priority is creating jobs and building a strong, next-generation economy. Ontario is fast becoming a global leader in innovation, and MaRS plays a key role in getting us there.

This decision will be made in a way that best serves our innovation agenda, our economy and Ontario taxpayers.

ASTHMA

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Premier. Last session, I worked very hard to try to get my private member's bill, Ryan's Law, passed through committee so it could be passed into law before the election. Unfortunately, Premier, this didn't occur.

I will be reintroducing Ryan's Law, which will protect the 20% of students with asthma. However, with a majority government, opposition bills tend to get shelved regardless of how vital they are. I hope this doesn't happen with Ryan's Law, Premier, because it would suggest that your government would be willing to sacrifice the safety of our children in order to deny a Tory MPP's bill.

Ryan's Law is important. It will protect children with asthma. It's that simple.

Premier, when I reintroduce Ryan's Law, will you commit to doing everything you can to ensure its quick passage?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want to commend the member for putting forward this legislation. I think that private members' bills are extremely important. From my perspective, as I said earlier, it doesn't matter where good ideas come from. If we can find ways to help school kids who have asthma to be safer, then obviously we have to do that.

I assume the member opposite will reintroduce this piece of legislation, Ryan's Law, and the committee will need to look at it.

As I said, if we can find ways to make sure that school kids who have asthma are safer, then we have an obligation to do that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Premier, the best way to ensure this bill gets passed is to ensure that your House leader works to get my bill back to the forefront of committee.

During the election campaign, I heard another very discouraging story. This is from a young girl. She told me she suffered an asthma attack on the bus while traveling to school. However, due to current regulations and school board policies that do not allow children to carry their relief puffers, she had to sit through the bus ride during her asthma attack, wait until the bus got to the school, get off the bus and then find a teacher who was responsible for giving her her inhaler so that she could attain some relief.

1110

That story should frighten you. Had the attack been more severe, the outcome could have been far more tragic, just like poor Ryan in Straffordville. That's why

Ryan's Law is so important. Among other things, it permits children to carry their relief inhalers at all times, provided they have permission from their health care providers.

Premier, we can't wait on this. When Ryan's Law passes second reading, will you make it a priority to help get it through committee?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I said, it's very important to me that where there are situations where we can put in place a structure, put in place a law, put in place a regulation that is going to keep kids safer, then obviously we need to do that. As this piece of legislation goes through, and when it goes to committee, Mr. Speaker, then the committee needs to deal with it, certainly to try to make sure that we put the right regulations in place.

One of the things, though, that I would need to just say to the member opposite is, first of all, there are a lot of pieces of legislation that are introduced and a lot of them have huge merit, Mr. Speaker. But the other thing is, we need to sort out what's school board policy and what's provincial law, where are the interactions between those things. I think it's very important, as a piece of legislation like this goes through, that we examine that and make sure it's not something that's happening at the local level as opposed to the provincial level. That's the problem.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: To the Premier: At the end of 2014, the Premier's Advisory Council on Government Assets, headed by TD CEO Ed Clark, will present recommendations to this government regarding the whole or partial privatization of the LCBO, Hydro One and OPG. These recommendations in turn will be fed into the 2015 budget process. The government factors in revenues from all significant initiatives of this sort into its long-term fiscal framework.

Will the government tell this House how much is slotted into the fiscal framework from the full or partial sale of these core public assets?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the question. It allows us now to talk about the relevance of reviewing the assets owned by government. Mr. Speaker, the shareholders of these assets are the people of Ontario, the taxpayer. They have a right for us to ensure that we maximize its potential, either by way of increasing the dividends by which those crown corporations can produce and/or looking at ways that we can invest our monies in appropriate manners to even greater returns by putting it through the Trillium Trust, which is part of the budget.

But, Mr. Speaker, we are guided by the principles that are core principles, which include our policy objectives to maximize its value by representing the good value that it represents to Ontarians, and it's also about ensuring that they work in the best interests of the public so that we do not have a repeat of the sale of the 407. We must

ensure that we take rigorous measures to protect these assets and the annuity by which they provide dividends. We must have—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It sure doesn't sound to me like they're ruling out privatization. The real fact of the matter is that after missing its 2014 deficit projection by \$2.4 billion, this government has projected that its \$12.5-billion deficit will magically disappear in the next three years. This includes a near-miraculous \$5.3-billion reduction in 2016-17 alone.

This is unprecedented, and no serious student of Ontario's budget believes that this kind of reduction will take place without a significant sale of core assets. How much has this government slotted into its long-term fiscal framework from the sale of LCBO, OPG and Hydro One assets?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, it's incumbent upon the government to review the functions of these crown corporations and the assets which we hold. It doesn't mean we're selling anything. What it means is that we're maximizing the potential of these crown corporations for the benefit of the shareholders, which are the people of Ontario and the taxpayer.

The expert council will evaluate what it is that we own. Our priority is to continue to invest in infrastructure and in transit, which will maximize the potential of being competitive in the long run. These are the principles that guide us. It's also about ensuring that the monies that are invested by government are invested wisely for the benefit of the people of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, this is not something new. The United Kingdom and Australia have adopted some of these very measures to their great benefit. What we must do is ensure that we invest in those assets that provide the maximum return for the taxpayer and also maximize our revenue and our value assets of those—nothing at this point is being considered to be sold, although we made it clear in the budget that we're not going to be passive investors on stocks—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Hon. Charles Sousa:—nor should we be—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. New question?

PENSION PLANS

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On my first time rising in this chamber, I'd like to say what an honour and a privilege it is to be here representing the people of Halton, and congratulations on your re-election.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Associate Minister of Finance, it is the desire of our government that Ontario be the best place in the world to grow old. In the past, Ontarians and Canadians have been well served by the Canada Pension Plan. However, middle-class Canadians know that the current CPP is not adequate for their

retirement. Provincial and federal government officials and pension experts agree that Canadians, especially the middle class, need more support in their retirement years. After a lifetime of work and contributing to the economy, retired Ontarians deserve better than to face plunging standards of living.

Can the minister responsible for the new Ontario Retirement Pension Plan please explain how the ORPP will help Ontarians become more secure in their retirement?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Associate Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations on your re-election. Thank you to the member from Halton for her question today.

As announced in our government's May 1 budget, we are committed to building retirement security with a made-in-Ontario pension plan that puts secure retirement on the horizon for every worker. The ORPP will mirror the CPP, enhancing benefits for middle-income earners while keeping contributions low.

Unless we take action now, future generations of retirees will be left with a lower standard of living.

Analysis shows that a CPP enhancement will have economic benefits by growing the economy and creating jobs. Higher disposable income for future retirees means less reliance on social programs funded by taxpayers. However, the federal government has refused to accept the consensus amongst the provinces and analysis by experts to work on enhancing the CPP.

We're standing up for the people of Ontario by continuing to do the right thing and leading the way towards a pension plan that gives the people of Ontario retirement—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Be seated, please.

Supplementary?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you to the Associate Minister of Finance for the answer. Again, to the Associate Minister of Finance, I am pleased to hear you are working on a plan that will help Ontarians retire with security. My constituents in Halton are concerned that, as Ontarians continue to live longer and less workplaces are offering workplace pension plans, they will not be able to save enough for their retirement.

In 2012, only 34% of Ontario's population belonged to a workplace pension plan. And my younger constituents, who are expected to have multiple employers, will be more likely to encounter a patchwork of workplace coverage that will make saving for retirement even more difficult.

Can the minister please explain how the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will build on the CPP to enhance retirement benefits for Ontarians?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you, again, to the industrious member from Halton.

The ORPP would be the first of its kind in Canada and would be introduced in 2017 to coincide with the

expected reductions in employment insurance premiums. If negotiations with the federal government on enhancing CPP were to be successful in the future, the ORPP would be integrated into the CPP.

The ORPP would require equal contributions to be shared between employers and employees, not exceeding 1.9% each. It would aim to provide a replacement rate of 15% of an individual's earnings up to a maximum annual earnings threshold of \$90,000.

1120

When combined with CPP, an individual with steady career earnings over 40 years of \$90,000 could replace about 30% of pre-retirement income and could receive annual benefits of about \$25,000, which roughly doubles retirement benefits under the CPP alone.

We are committed to providing retirement security to all Ontarians and moving ahead with the planning of the ORPP. This is just one step in that direction.

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Good luck on your appointment.

Minister, two weeks ago, I received a letter from our local community care access centre, stating that the organization will be limiting the number of new patients it accepts less than three months into their fiscal. Your government has talked a lot about investing in community-care-based service, yet 10 days after the election, our local CCAC is telling me they will be limiting the number of new patients in need of care.

Minister, do you support Central West CCAC's decision?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Of course I do. It's just unfortunate that the party opposite didn't support our budget, nor did the third party, because not only did we dramatically increase, by \$260 million, our support to community care, including our CCACs, in 2013, but we had laid out in the budget a further \$750 million in increased funding to community care, including our CCACs, by 2017. It was in the budget. Unfortunately, as a result of the two parties opposite not supporting that budget, we had to have an election to get us to this point.

We are committed to our CCACs. We have invested over the past number of years a significant increase in our CCACs to make sure that we're providing that quality care to individuals and their families when they need it, where they need it, and as close to home as possible.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Minister, I understand that you're new, but this letter came out on June 23, which would be post-election, which would be after you announced that the same budget is coming through. So clearly the local CCAC is going to have the same problem.

I understand you have inherited a number of crises in the health portfolio, but there really is an opportunity to make a difference here. This is a matter of priorities. Last

week in the throne speech, we heard a lot of talk about building Ontario up. Well, I can tell you that in Dufferin-Caledon we don't believe in building Ontario up by clawing back access to health care service.

I will ask the minister again, will you do the right thing and direct the local CCAC to prioritize their decisions to ensure that all patients are provided with the health care service they need when they need it?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Unbelievable hypocrisy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to ask the member to withdraw.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Minister of Health?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Again, we are committed to our CCACs. In fact, the funding to our CCACs has increased by 99% since 2003. We have further investments that we're making in the budget. I think this speaks to the imperative of making sure that the budget which has been tabled is quickly debated and passed in the coming days so we can go ahead and continue to invest and increase our investments to this important aspect of the continuum of health care.

Mr. Speaker, we know that there is always more work to be done. I'm very proud of the work that's been done in the past number of years to make home care and funding for supportive services—in fact, in our budget, as individuals are aware, we're increasing the—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin-Caledon asked the question. Order, please.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: —wages of our personal support workers, a key provider of our support services and our home care; we're increasing that by 30% over the next few years.

There is more work to be done. We need to start by passing the budget.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Families across Ontario are struggling to find safe, affordable child care for their kids while this government is making the crisis even worse by cutting child care funding to 18 communities across our province. Child care centres like Coronation Park Day Nursery in Sarnia are on the chopping block. Over a hundred kids at that centre in Sarnia alone are at risk of losing access to child care.

Can the Premier explain to parents in Sarnia and across our province why her government is intent on shutting down child care centres that families rely upon?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Since 2003, child care funding in Ontario has increased from \$532.4 million to close to \$1 billion. That's a 90% increase. So in fact, quite contrary to what the leader of the third party is saying—that we are cutting funding to child care—we are actually increasing funding to child care.

But there are two things happening. One is that full-day kindergarten is being implemented across the prov-

ince so that every four- and five-year-old in Ontario in September will have access to a full-day kindergarten program. That means that there are changes within the child care system; there's no doubt about that. So we are working with the system. We are changing the funding formula. We recognize that as those four- and five-year-olds are in full-day kindergarten, there are changes that happen within the preschool child care system.

We will continue to invest. We will continue to work with the system as we change the funding formula, but our support for child care is steadfast and will remain so.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I think the Premier just admitted that she has created a crisis in the child care system. The Premier's Trojan Horse budget, in fact, does nothing to stop the child care cuts in 18 communities. When only one in five kids can access licensed child care in this province, no community can afford cuts to child care funding, no community should be forced to close the doors on their licensed child care centres in this province and no family should have to worry about losing their kid's spot in child care. But this government has decided that services will be cut, and child care happens to be the first to go.

Why won't the Premier do the right thing and commit today to stop the cuts in the child care centres in Sarnia and all 18 communities across this province? Why doesn't she just commit today to do the right thing by these families and these children in these 18 communities?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, there are nearly 90,000 new spaces in child care since 2003. There are tens of thousands of new child care spaces in Ontario. The fact is that we are going through a transition; there is no doubt about that. I would hope that the leader of the third party and her colleagues would be able to understand and work with their communities as we go through the transition.

Four- and five-year-olds are going to be in full-day kindergarten as of September. All four- and five-year-olds have access now to full-day kindergarten. What we need to do is to make sure that the child care system adjusts to that so that the preschool kids—the zero- to three-year-old kids—have the opportunity to be in the child care system and that we have before- and after-care for students. Those are changes. That means the system is going through a transformation. We have put mitigation funding in place. We will continue to work with the child care system. But to suggest that not having full-day kindergarten would be a good thing is not in the best interests of kids, and that's essentially what the leader of the third party is—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.
New question? The member from Burlington.

CYCLING POLICIES

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank my constituents in the riding of Burlington for their confidence.

My question is for the Minister of Transportation. My riding of Burlington is a beautiful place to ride a bike. From our waterfront to our trails to our on-road facilities, cycling makes an important contribution to a more healthy, active and connected Burlington. Indeed, cycling is not only good for my community; it enhances the health and well-being of my constituents. Cycling is good for economic development and tourism too, as witnessed by bicycle tourism initiatives like the greenbelt and our beautiful waterfront trail. That's why I'm proud to be a part of a government that is committed to supporting cycling and cyclists across Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, can you please explain to this House what our government is doing to support and promote cycling and cyclists on every path, trail and roadway?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to begin by thanking the newly elected member for Burlington for that outstanding question and welcoming her to Ontario's Legislature.

I also want to thank the member for her tireless support for such a great cause, the cause of cycling here in our province. Because of her advocacy and her passion for safe roads in our province, we have a vision for cycling in Ontario that all of us can be proud of.

I also want to quickly pay tribute to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, who played a leadership role in making sure that we brought this project forward.

In August 2013, our government introduced #CycleON, the most comprehensive cycling strategy that Ontario has ever seen. This strategy touches many parts of our government and will play a large role in building healthier and stronger communities: \$10 million over three years through a new cost-shared program that will help municipalities expand their local cycling networks, and in addition, \$15 million over three years will be dedicated to investments in cycling infrastructure.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Thank you to the minister for that answer. I agree with you that the benefits of cycling are limitless for our communities, our economies and our health. Cycling connects Ontarians to communities and to each other. That is why support for cities and municipalities is vital to the promotion of cycling.

Speaker, through you, I'd like the minister to elaborate on what we can expect for cycling as our government rolls out #CycleON, the Ontario cycling strategy, and on how communities across Ontario will benefit.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member again for that great supplementary. We are coming up on the one-year anniversary of our #CycleON strategy. Last August, we released our long-term 20-year vision, based on five strategic directions to encourage the growth of cycling and to improve safety for cyclists across the province.

#CycleON is to be implemented through ongoing multi-year action plans. The first action plan, which was introduced at the Ontario Bike Summit earlier this year, will focus on year-one commitments, but includes many

initiatives to be implemented with partners over years two to five. Developed with stakeholders, including AMO, CAA and Share The Road, suggestions from the chief coroner's 2012 review, and public comments, this plan will help Ontarians continue to move forward with a progressive, balanced and responsible cycling strategy.

Remember, Speaker, sharing the road and having a great time doing it is what cycling in Ontario is all about. Cycle on.

ELECTION ADVERTISING

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Speaker, before I begin, I just would like to congratulate you on your re-election as Speaker of the House.

My question is to the Premier. Premier, as the election began, Chief Electoral Officer Greg Essensa repeated his call for a limit on third party advertising. Mr. Essensa stated, "When I look across the country, we are the only jurisdiction that has no spending limit." He went on to say that the process is "completely non-transparent." We may never know just how much these groups spent.

Dalton McGuinty's 2005 and 2007 legislation added little transparency, leaving the Chief Electoral Officer asking for more reforms. Premier, this is your chance to prove to the people of Ontario that you are different. Since you are in an open and transparent mood today, are you willing to protect the integrity of democracy and pledge to place limits on third party advertising spending?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I appreciate the question from the member of the opposition. I endeavour always to be in an open and transparent mood, so—

Hon. Jeff Leal: Hear, hear.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much.

We have rules in place to ensure that there is both transparency and free speech in our election campaigns. Those things have to be balanced. We are the party that introduced third party advertising rules in Ontario for the first time, in 2007.

Under current rules, third parties that spend \$500 or more on election advertising are required to register with the Chief Electoral Officer so that there actually is an accounting for how that money is spent. Registered third parties also have to report to the Chief Electoral Officer on election advertising expenses. If election advertising expenses are \$5,000 or more, then those reports have to be audited. So we have taken many steps to make sure that there is openness in this process.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Premier, that's the same answer you gave me in the fall when I introduced my Bill 101. But Speaker, we are the only jurisdiction in Canada that has no spending limitation on advertisers, who have the power to influence elections. That jeopardizes the integrity of this institution and is a disservice to our democracy.

The Chief Electoral Officer recommends that no group should be able to spend millions of dollars to influence elections without any transparency. Premier, we agree.

The status quo is setting the stage for corruption. Premier, will you implement the Chief Electoral Officer's recommendations?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, let me just say that I disagree that there is no transparency, because I think that there have been steps taken by our government to put transparency in place.

But having said that, we're always open to conversations on ways to improve Ontario's electoral process. Third parties supported all three parties during the election campaign, so there's not a difference in terms of the treatment, party by party. If there is a willingness and a desire on the part of all parties and the Chief Electoral Officer to have a conversation, we're open to having that conversation, but I think it's something that everyone needs to take part in.

ASSISTANCE TO FLOOD VICTIMS

Ms. Sarah Campbell: To the Premier: People across the northwest are still suffering from record high water levels and flooding that started last month, with as many as 10 communities in my riding alone declaring states of emergency.

I toured the area and I saw first-hand the devastation: homes overwhelmed by flooding; sections of highway completely washed away; significant erosion of shoreline, resulting in lost personal property and a threatened cemetery; and evacuations.

People in the northwest are doing an amazing job banding together in this difficult time, but it is up to this government to ensure that there are funds available for cleanup and recovery.

A couple of years ago, when Thunder Bay experienced a similar emergency, it had to wait over a year to receive provincial assistance from this government. People in my riding simply can't wait that long.

Will the Premier help the people of Kenora-Rainy River today by committing funds from the Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program to provide badly needed relief to these 10 hard-hit communities and commit to a timeline of when we can expect this funding?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member for the question, but I do want to say that the assertion that after the Thunder Bay flood our government was slow to respond—in fact, not only did we meet our commitments in providing assistance to the city of Thunder Bay, in fact we've exceeded our commitment through the ODRA Program under MMAH.

In terms of the flooding that's occurring in the member's communities, of course we're aware of it and of course it is a very, very serious and significant occurrence. Unfortunately, it seems like we find ourselves in these situations all too regularly now. In fact, what were abnormal weather events seem to be occurring on a far too regular basis.

I can tell the member that I've been in direct contact with the mayors of the three potentially directly affected communities—those that have been directly affected: Mayor Avis in Fort Frances, Mayor Brown in Atikokan and Mayor Canfield in Kenora. I've talked to them. They've been very pleased to this point, I would say, with the outreach and the support that have been provided by all of the appropriate ministries, including MNR. We continue to monitor the situation. I've asked them to contact me at any time that they feel necessary if they are, at some point, uncertain with the response that's coming through.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

I know who my usual suspects are now. I appreciate being given that opportunity to know who they are.

The House recessed from 1137 to 1300.

ESTIMATES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On a point of order, the government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I have a message from the Honourable David C. Onley, the Lieutenant Governor, signed by his own hand.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for the year ending March 31, 2015, and recommends them to the Legislative Assembly. Toronto, July 7, 2014, David C. Onley.

TABLING OF SESSIONAL PAPERS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that during the interval between the 40th and the 41st Parliaments, the following reports from parliamentary officers were tabled:

—on June 4, an opinion from the Chief Electoral Officer concerning the statements by the New Democratic Party and the Ontario Liberal Party under section 4 of the Taxpayer Protection Act, 1999;

—on June 17, the 2013 annual report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario;

—on June 19, the 2013-14 annual report from the Office of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario;

—on June 23, the 2013-14 annual report of the Ombudsman of Ontario;

—on June 26, the report of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario concerning the review expenses claims under the Cabinet Ministers' and Opposition Leaders' Expenses Review and Accountability Act, 2002, for the period of April 1, 2013, to March 31, 2014.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'm pleased to welcome my mother, Dawn Potts, into the House today. She kept my

father in check for years in his performance as Mr. Justice J.H. Potts, and she has committed to doing the same for me. Thank you, Mom.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And we welcome her.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

RIDING OF WELLINGTON–HALTON HILLS

Mr. Ted Arnott: Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate you and every member of this House on their successful election on June 12. I'm looking forward to working with each of them over the next four years in the 41st Parliament as we all seek to make Ontario a better place for all of its residents.

On June 13, the day after the election, we were back to work at my constituency office, and I wrote the Premier to highlight three key issues in my riding: the Highway 6 Morriston bypass, improved GO train service, and high-speed Internet in rural Ontario. On July 3, I tabled three private members' resolutions on these issues. They are the first three items listed on the order paper today.

Highway 6 serves as a vital link between the 401 and the Hamilton-Niagara region and the US border. A bypass around Morriston will eliminate a major traffic bottleneck, improve safety and allow for the free flow of goods to the border.

During the election campaign, the government promised full-day two-way GO train service between Waterloo region and the GTA. What is the time frame for keeping this commitment? How does the government define "full-day two-way service"? Will this include more stops in Wellington–Halton Hills?

Finally, lack of access to high-speed Internet in rural Ontario continues to be a concern. Reliable and affordable access to high-speed Internet is essential in today's economy. A provincial strategy for expanding affordable high-speed Internet would help our local businesses grow and attract new investment to our rural communities.

I commend all of these issues to the government and urge immediate support for them.

IMMIGRANTS

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, on July 1, I had the pleasure of attending several Canada Day celebrations in London. My constituents in London–Fanshawe as well as residents of the other London ridings celebrated in style, with parties, enormous cakes and spectacular firework displays.

In the afternoon, I had the honour of taking part in London's annual Canada citizenship ceremony, where dozens of Londoners proudly raised their right hands under a canopy of red-and-white flags, took the oath of citizenship and officially became Canadian citizens.

It was such a wonderful thing to witness. I have enjoyed it every year, and it was particularly important to me this year in the context of my new critic portfolio of Citizenship and Immigration. There were new Canadians from countries all over the world and of all ages, including several excited children.

I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to everyone who became a new Canadian citizen on Canada Day both in my hometown of London and across this great country. It was an event that really made me feel proud to be Canadian, and I admire these new citizens so much for their love and commitment to our country and their desire to carry the honourable title of citizen to be part of the Canadian family.

RAMADAN

Mr. John Fraser: I'd like to say it's great to be back here at Queen's Park, and I'd like to extend congratulations to all my colleagues here on their successful election and a warm welcome to all those new members.

Mr. Speaker, it is on behalf of all the members of this Legislature that I would like to extend our warmest greetings to the members of our Muslim community who are observing Ramadan this month.

Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam. Ramadan is a time for fasting and self-sacrifice. It is a time for prayer, reflection and spiritual growth. It is a time to strengthen ties with family and community. To our Muslim neighbours, thank you for giving your children the gift of faith.

The Muslim Canadian community is an important part of the rich cultural mosaic that is Ontario, and Ramadan is an opportunity to recognize the many contributions Muslim Canadians make to enrich our society. I look forward to attending the many celebrations that will take place in Ottawa South over this month.

To all our Muslim friends, Ramadan Mubarak.

SEAFORTH LIONS CLUB

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Huron-Bruce.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to join you in the 41st Parliament, and I welcome all the new members as well.

I rise today to recognize and congratulate the Seaforth Lions Club on celebrating their 90th anniversary with a fun-filled Canada Day program. The Seaforth Lions Club formed in December 1924 because local individuals recognized the need for service clubs to assist in their community. Today, there are 1,369,000 Lions members in 46,281 clubs in 208 country and geographic areas around the world, and this Seaforth service organization holds the honour of being the 17th-oldest Lions Club in Canada.

The Seaforth Lions' signature project is the operation and maintenance of the beautiful Lions Park on the east side of town, and it is an absolutely gorgeous home to the

community pool, both of which have been operating since 1925. The Seaforth Lions graciously recognize, though, that their community landmark would not be possible without its local community and businesses who have always supported fundraising projects over the years.

Congratulations once again to the 90th anniversary committee for their successful old-fashioned family picnic, an entire Canada Day program.

To the Seaforth Lions, I would like to say, "Keep up the tremendous work." Communities throughout Huron-Bruce benefit from the commitment and vision of local service organizations, and the Seaforth Lions lead by example.

BÉNÉVOLES

M. Gilles Bisson: J'ai eu l'occasion deux fois dernièrement, ce printemps et cet été, d'être capable de célébrer nos bénévoles dans la communauté de Mattice, numéro un, et dans la communauté de Hearst, numéro deux. C'était vraiment quelque chose de spécial parce que, comme on le sait, dans les petites communautés à travers l'Ontario, l'esprit d'une communauté, c'est les bénévoles, et parfois ce sont les bénévoles qui font marcher une communauté. Quand on regarde une communauté comme Mattice ou une communauté comme Hearst, ce n'est pas grand comme Toronto où il y a des services à chaque coin. Ces communautés-là, beaucoup de leurs services sont desservis hors de la communauté elle-même. Parfois ce sont ces bénévoles qui font tout l'ouvrage qui est si nécessaire pour faire fonctionner la communauté.

On a eu deux belles célébrations, la première à Mattice, où on a eu la chance de célébrer tous ceux et celles qui ont été nommés volontaires de l'année pour cette année. J'aimerais les féliciter avec ma collègue, Carol Hughes, qui a aussi amené des salutations. On a eu la chance juste après ça d'être capable de faire la communauté de Hearst. C'est là que ma collègue, Carol Hughes, et moi avons eu l'occasion de travailler ensemble. Tandis que moi j'étais à la célébration à Hearst, elle était à Opasatika en train de faire la célébration des aînés dans la communauté d'Opasatika. De la part, je pense, de tous les parlementaires et des chefs de parti ici, on célèbre avec les communautés de Hearst, Opasatika, et Mattice tous ces volontaires qui font marcher leur communauté. Puis, on dit à tous de continuer le bel ouvrage. Chapeau! C'est vraiment apprécié.

GO TRANSIT

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'm proud to stand for the first time in the Legislature to represent the constituents of my riding of Newmarket-Aurora.

Mr. Speaker, I've heard from residents in my riding for several months now about the need for improved GO train service heading north from Toronto: Late afternoon buses have been standing room only for some time, and

the last train heads north too soon for those who work late. So I'm delighted that, as of June 28, GO Transit has added not one but two additional northbound trains on the Barrie corridor, one leaving Union Station at 3:40 p.m. and the other at 6:45 p.m. These trains make commuting much easier for up to 1,900 northbound passengers each trip by providing a more flexible travel schedule.

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This improvement in GO train service is just one of many over the past few years. This government has invested millions of dollars improving our local GO train stations and bus depots. In response, GO train usage in our area has greatly increased. Our community knows the importance of a quality transit system: improved quality of life, improved business productivity, and improved economic development for our towns.

Mr. Speaker, we are thankful for this improved service. I look forward to building on the achievements of our Liberal government to ensure that residents in my community of Newmarket–Aurora get out of gridlock and get on the GO.

TRAGEDY IN KITCHENER–CONESTOGA

Mr. Michael Harris: Speaker, today I rise to recognize the courage and community spirit of New Hamburg residents who joined together to overcome a terrible tragedy that happened last Boxing Day. Last year, the Reiner family—Bill, Deana, Alexander and Charlene—experienced the horror of learning that their son and brother had fallen into the Nith River. Five long months later, emergency officials recovered five-year-old Robbie Reiner and brought him home.

The search wasn't easy. It was a long winter and the water levels remained high for months, but the Waterloo Regional Police Service, the Wilmot fire department and the OPP diving team didn't give up. They kept working around the clock. In fact, Sergeant Mark Morrissey spent countless hours off duty surveying the area until Robbie was found.

I would like to thank all the brave men and women who worked together on the search. I would also like to thank the members of the community who supported the family in several ways through these difficult times. Local businesses donated supplies for the search, residents cooked meals for the family, and volunteers hosted a fundraiser called Go Blue for Robbie in January. To see so much support and co-operation to help a family in need is truly remarkable and shows why New Hamburg is truly a special place.

Again, thank you to all those who helped, and my thoughts and prayers go out to the Reiner family.

BEACHES INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

Mr. Arthur Potts: Just last Thursday, the day after being sworn in as a member of this House, for which I'm

absolutely delighted for the opportunity, I attended a media conference at the iconic Balmy Beach Club in my ward for the Beaches jazz festival. It was my first official duty as the MPP for Beaches–East York. I'm delighted that my first opportunity to speak here is to tell members more about this great festival.

Lido Chilelli has worked on this festival for more than 25 years. What used to attract thousands is now attracting hundreds of thousands. Organizers expect that in excess of 800,000 people will be coming to the Beach, enjoying the jazz music. Jazz artists from around the world will be playing in select venues from Queen Street East all the way to Leuty Avenue. This year, the main stage will be at Woodbine Park, where thousands will be serenaded by the dulcet tones of some of the world's best jazz musicians.

In addition to presenting jazz music, the festival hosts workshops for aspiring musicians, and for the first time it encompasses the very popular Waterfront Blues festival, celebrating its 10th anniversary.

I am particularly pleased that, each year, portions of the festival proceeds are donated to Toronto East General Hospital. This year's organizers expect that upwards of \$40,000 will be donated to the capital fund for the new addition there. My appreciation goes out to all the residents of Beaches–East York, whose lives are considerably disrupted by this festival but who support it because of the contributions it makes to the city and to our community.

I hope all members will take time out from their busy schedules and enjoy the Beaches International Jazz Festival. I am particularly looking forward to the funky rhythms of Ivan Neville's band Dumpstaphunk on Saturday, June 19.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I look forward to the fun. I apologize. That'll be the last time that happens.

EVENTS IN NORTHUMBERLAND– QUINTE WEST

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Speaker, congratulations on your position as Speaker again. I'm sure you'll do a great job.

I'm very excited to be back here in the Legislature representing the good people of Northumberland–Quinte West. I'm truly honoured that they elected me as their MPP once again. Who could ask for a better way to begin my term than to celebrate this great country of ours at Canada Day events across my riding?

I started my day very early in Campbellford, where the Campbellford Rotary club served a fantastic pancake breakfast. Then, for my second breakfast about an hour later, I joined some of my friends at the Codrington Community Centre, where they were also celebrating Canada Day. Then off it was to my hometown of Brighton, where I took part in the opening ceremonies. Then off to the Cobourg parade, where I rode on an antique fire truck. It was great to see people along the way cheering and expressing how happy they were to celebrate Canada Day.

The parade was followed by the official opening with some local dignitaries, and I helped cut the cake that everyone enjoyed.

Then off to Port Hope to have a cold one. It was mid-afternoon. Their festival was great and I had an opportunity to visit with a lot of folks.

Next was Cramahe township, serving hot dogs and cake to help them celebrate Canada Day. I ended off the day in my hometown of Brighton with fireworks.

The day's events helped to remind me of how fortunate I am to be the provincial representative for Northumberland–Quinte West, the best riding in the best province in the best country in the world.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT (POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER), 2014

LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA SÉCURITÉ PROFESSIONNELLE ET L'ASSURANCE CONTRE LES ACCIDENTS DU TRAVAIL (TROUBLE DE STRESS POST-TRAUMATIQUE)

Ms. DiNovo moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 2, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder / *Projet de loi 2, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail relativement au trouble de stress post-traumatique.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Congratulations on your election, Mr. Speaker.

The Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997, is amended to create a rebuttable presumption relating to post-traumatic stress disorder affecting emergency response workers. Subsection 15.3(1) defines emergency response worker to mean a firefighter, paramedic or police officer.

Subsection 15.3(2) states that if an emergency response worker suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, the disorder is presumed to be an occupational disease that occurred due to the employment as an emergency response worker, unless the contrary is shown.

The bill sets out procedural and transitional rules governing claims to which a presumption applies.

PLANNING AMENDMENT ACT (ENABLING MUNICIPALITIES TO REQUIRE INCLUSIONARY HOUSING), 2014

LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE (INCLUSION DE LOGEMENTS ABORDABLES PAR LES MUNICIPALITÉS)

Ms. DiNovo moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 3, An Act to amend the Planning Act with respect to inclusionary housing / *Projet de loi 3, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire à l'égard de l'inclusion de logements abordables.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Section 34 of the Planning Act is amended to allow the councils of local municipalities to pass zoning bylaws to require inclusionary housing in the municipality by mandating that a specified percentage of housing units and new housing developments containing 20 or more housing units must be affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

The new section 37.1 of the act deals with inclusionary housing bylaws in greater detail.

Section 51 of the act is amended to allow the approval authority to impose, as a condition of approval of a plan of a subdivision, a requirement that a specified percentage of housing units in new housing developments in the subdivision containing 20 or more housing units must be affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

METROLINX AMENDMENT ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR METROLINX

Ms. DiNovo moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 4, An Act to amend the Metrolinx Act, 2006 / *Projet de loi 4, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur Metrolinx.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This is in honour of Jonah Schein.

The bill amends the Metrolinx Act, 2006, to require Metrolinx to ensure that any passenger railway system established between downtown Toronto and Toronto Pearson International Airport is not powered by diesel fuel.

RESPECT FOR MUNICIPALITIES ACT
(CITY OF TORONTO), 2014
LOI DE 2014 SUR LE RESPECT
DES MUNICIPALITÉS
(CITÉ DE TORONTO)

Ms. DiNovo moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 5, An Act respecting the City of Toronto and the Ontario Municipal Board / Projet de loi 5, Loi portant sur la cité de Toronto et la Commission des affaires municipales de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: The bill changes the relationship in law between the city of Toronto and the Ontario Municipal Board. Currently, under various statutes that cover land use planning, certain municipal decisions can be appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board. Amendments eliminate those rights of appeal with respect to decisions of the city of Toronto. Amendments also eliminate a right to make certain other types of applications to the board, with respect to the city.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further introduction of bills? The Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I just want to make sure that the member for Parkdale-High Park has no more to introduce before I—

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'm done for now.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Thank you.

INFRASTRUCTURE FOR JOBS
AND PROSPERITY ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR L'INFRASTRUCTURE
AU SERVICE DE L'EMPLOI
ET DE LA PROSPÉRITÉ

Mr. Duguid moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 6, An Act to enact the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2014 / Projet de loi 6, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur l'infrastructure au service de l'emploi et de la prospérité.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Hon. Brad Duguid: No, Mr. Speaker. It has been before the Legislature before. No statement is required.

BETTER BUSINESS CLIMATE ACT, 2014
LOI DE 2014 VISANT À INSTAURER
UN CLIMAT PLUS PROPICE
AUX AFFAIRES

Mr. Duguid moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014 / Projet de loi 7, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur l'obligation de faire rapport concernant la réduction des fardeaux administratifs et la Loi de 2014 sur les partenariats pour la création d'emplois et la croissance.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Again, Mr. Speaker, this bill was before the Legislature in the last session, so no statement is necessary.

MOTIONS

APPOINTMENT OF HOUSE OFFICERS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the appointment of deputy speakers for the 41st Parliament.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Government House leader?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that Bas Balkissoon, member for the electoral district of Scarborough-Rouge River, be appointed Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House; that Ted Arnott, member for the electoral district of Wellington-Halton Hills, be appointed First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House; that Rick Nicholls, member for the electoral district of Chatham-Kent-Essex, be appointed Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House; and that Paul Miller, member for the electoral district of Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, be appointed Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader moves that Bas Balkissoon, member of the electoral district of Scarborough—dispense? Dispensed.

Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Mr. Arthur Potts: A point of order, Mr. Speaker: The honourable member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke—I appreciate you must have been listening very carefully to my remarks. He suggested I may have said “June” as a starting date of the jazz festival when in fact it is July. If I can correct the record to that effect, I'd appreciate it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is a point of order. All members are allowed to correct their record. We now note that the jazz festival is in July, not June.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I've got to tell you, it's a great festival which coincides nicely in September for the one in Brantford, so I just thought I'd put that on the record.

PETITIONS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is now time for petitions.

I have to start with a new trend. The member from—

Mr. Bill Walker: Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Oh, I'll do that then.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I raise this in honour of Johnny O'Toole.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Green Energy Act has driven up the cost of electricity in Ontario due to unrealistic subsidies for certain energy sources, including the world's highest subsidies for solar power; and

"Whereas this cost is passed on to ratepayers through the global adjustment, which can account for almost half of a ratepayer's hydro bill; and

"Whereas the high cost of energy is severely impacting the quality of life of Ontario's residents, especially fixed-income seniors; and

"Whereas it is imperative to remedy Liberal mismanagement in the energy sector by implementing immediate reforms detailed in the Ontario PC white paper *Paths to Prosperity—Affordable Energy*;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009, and all other statutes that artificially inflate the cost of electricity with the aim of bringing down electricity rates and abolishing expensive surcharges such as the global adjustment and debt retirement charges."

I support this, will sign it and send it to the Clerks' table with page Ethan.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I present a petition signed by people right across Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

I agree with this petition. I will affix my name and give it to page Ethan to present to the House.

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LYME DISEASE

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's, Alzheimer's, arthritis, diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe; and

"Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of their professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario Health Insurance Plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process for establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives 45% to 95% of the time;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to direct the Ontario public health system and OHIP to include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme disease in Ontario and to have everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and

successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians.”

I’m pleased to affix my signature and send it to the table with page Lavanya.

GASOLINE PRICES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations to you on your election.

During the election, what I heard most about at the door was the price of gas, so I’m really happy to present this petition, collected by Leena Luopa in Worthington, in my riding. It reads as follows:

“Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline; and

“Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

“Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of gas-price regulation; and

“Whereas jurisdictions with gas-price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to “mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name and ask my good page Émilie to bring it to the Clerk.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Speaker, I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Health Canada approved Esbriet in October 2012 for individuals with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF);

“Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has declined to list Esbriet on the Ontario drug benefit formulary or reimburse patients through the Exceptional Access Program;

“Whereas Esbriet is the first of its kind to be approved in Canada for the treatment of IPF and will slow the progression of this fatal disease;

“Whereas the high cost of Esbriet is creating financial hardships for many individuals and their families. Only those patients who have access to a private drug plan can afford the cost of this medication, forcing some patients to go without treatment;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To review and reconsider the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care’s decision to decline any assistance with Esbriet and consider some form of assistance with the cost of this medication in order to improve the lives

of Ontarians with IPF and decrease the cost on the health care system associated with the disease.”

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this petition, affix my signature to it and pass it over to the page.

CREDIT UNIONS

Ms. Catherine Fife: I want to thank the Libro Credit Union in Kitchener–Waterloo for helping me to collect these signatures.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

“Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers’ resources;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario’s economy and create jobs in three ways:

“—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

“—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

“—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature and give it to page Daniel.

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the University of Guelph’s Kemptville and Alfred campuses are two of Ontario’s outstanding post-secondary agricultural schools; and

“Whereas these campuses have delivered specialized and high-quality programs to generations of students from agricultural communities across eastern Ontario and the future success of the region’s agri-food industry depends on continuing this strong partnership; and

“Whereas regional campuses like those in Kemptville and Alfred ensure the agri-food industry has access to the knowledge, research and innovation that are critical for Ontario to remain competitive in this rapidly changing sector;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That Premier Wynne in her dual capacity as Minister of Agriculture and Food act immediately to reverse the University of Guelph’s short-sighted and unacceptable decision to close its Kemptville and Alfred campuses.”

I agree with this and will be passing it on to page Ethan.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's a pleasure to rise in the House for the first time—

Applause.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Thank you. I'd like to present this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

I support this petition and affix my name.

BOATING SAFETY

Mr. Victor Fedeli: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the wearing of life jackets is not mandatory for all boaters, and this has been an ongoing issue for many years and has resulted in many deaths of people of all ages; and

"Whereas there are laws requiring mandatory use of seat belts, motorcycle helmets and other safety precautions; and

"Whereas deaths caused by not wearing life jackets can be prevented;

"We, the undersigned, support the proposal to request the department of Transport Canada that life jackets should be made mandatory for all boaters at all times, including other watercraft, and if not followed, punishments should include fines and other further consequences, including the suspension and/or revocation of boaters' licences."

This was presented by Andrew Vigers in North Bay. I support this. I will sign it and give it to page Émilie.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that has been collected by Madame Simone Poirier, from Chelmsford. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government" is making PET scanning "a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients...; and

"Whereas," since October 2009, "insured PET scans" are performed "in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;"

They "petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through" Health Sciences North, "thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens" of the northeast.

I fully support this petition. I will affix my name to it and ask page Ashley to bring it to the Clerk.

1340

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

Mr. Bill Walker: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's tradespeople are subject to stifling regulation and are compelled to pay membership fees to the unaccountable College of Trades; and

"Whereas these fees are a tax grab that drives down the wages of skilled tradespeople; and

"Whereas Ontario desperately needs a plan to solve our critical shortage of skilled tradespeople by encouraging our youth to enter the trades and attracting new tradespeople; and

"Whereas the current policies of the McGuinty/Wynne Liberal government only aggravate the looming skilled trades shortage in Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately disband the College of Trades, cease imposing needless membership fees and enact policies to attract young Ontarians into skilled trade careers."

I support this. I will affix my name and send it with page Katie.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from all over Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Whereas there are a growing number of reported cases of abuse, neglect and substandard care for our seniors in long-term-care homes and hospitals; and

“Whereas people with complaints have limited options, and frequently they don’t complain because they fear repercussions, which suggests too many seniors are being left in vulnerable situations without independent oversight; and

“Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada—including the three territories—where our Ombudsman does not have independent oversight of long-term-care homes and one of two without oversight of hospitals;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to expand the Ombudsman’s mandate to include Ontario’s long-term-care homes and hospitals in order to protect our most vulnerable seniors.”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my name to it and ask Ethan to bring it to the Clerk.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, as follows:

“Whereas household electricity bills have skyrocketed by 56% and electricity rates have tripled as a result of the Liberal government’s mismanagement of the energy sector;

“Whereas the billion-dollar gas plant scandal, wasteful and unaccountable spending at Ontario Power Generation and the unaffordable subsidies in the Green Energy Act will result in electricity bills climbing by another 35% by 2017 and 45% by 2020;

“Whereas the soaring cost of electricity is straining family budgets, particularly in rural Ontario, and hurting the ability of manufacturers and small businesses in the province to compete and create new jobs; and

“Whereas home heating and electricity are essential for families in rural Ontario who cannot afford to continue footing the bill for the government’s mismanagement;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To immediately implement policies ensuring Ontario’s power consumers, including families, farmers, and employers, have affordable and reliable electricity.”

I agree with this and will pass it on to page Ashley.

HOME CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from all over Ontario:

“Whereas many Ontarians need health care services at home and 6,100 people are currently on wait-lists for care;

“Whereas waiting for over 200 days for home care is unacceptable;

“Whereas eliminating the wait-lists won’t require any new funding if the government caps hospital CEO salaries, finds administrative efficiencies in the local health integration networks (LHINs) and community care access centres (CCACs), standardizes procurement policies and streamlines administration costs;”

They ask the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“That a five-day home care guarantee is established and existing wait-lists eliminated so that Ontarians receive the care they need within a reasonable time frame.”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my name to it and ask page Caitlin to bring it to the Clerk.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time for petitions.

Before I call orders of the day, I want to express my appreciation to the House for again granting me the opportunity to serve as First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House.

Applause.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): My goal is to be fair and impartial and to be deserving of the trust that you have granted to me. Thank you, again, very much.

Orders of the day? Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: First of all, Speaker, congratulations on your nomination by the House.

Government order number 1.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Consideration of the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by Mr. Rinaldi, that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor as follows:

To the Honourable David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

We, Her Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Ms. Vernile has moved that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To the Honourable David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

We, Her Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

I recognize the member for Kitchener Centre to lead off the debate on the throne speech.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Congratulations to you for filling in; you're doing a great job so far.

I will be sharing my time with the member from Northumberland—Quinte West.

Well, it is a tremendous honour to move the speech from the throne and to serve in this 41st Parliament, which has witnessed the election of more women in this chamber than any other Ontario Parliament, and to be serving with the first female Premier ever elected in Ontario.

Recently, I was humbled to earn the support of the good people of Kitchener Centre, a community that is reinventing itself in many exciting and dynamic ways. For over three decades, I served my community as a broadcast journalist for CTV News, anchoring and producing the current affairs program *Provincewide*. We reported on a wide variety of important issues and told the stories of the people in our region. Today, I am committed to continuing to work as a strong voice for the residents of Kitchener Centre in a new role as their elected representative in the Ontario Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, in the throne speech you heard our ambitious plan for building Ontario up, for moving Ontario forward, in the days and years ahead. If you want to see this plan in action, I encourage you to come to Kitchener Centre, and I know you don't live far from there. In the past decade, our city was facing the same difficult economic realities as many other Ontario communities: factories shutting down, people losing their jobs and a declining downtown core. But our community was built on an entrepreneurial spirit. We are dreamers and doers, and we love a challenge.

The first Europeans to the Kitchener area, who arrived in the early 1800s, were self-reliant, hard-working German Mennonites from Pennsylvania. Many more immigrants followed, and soon they established the town of Berlin, which came to be known as "busy Berlin." However, with the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, the anti-German sentiment grew in the area, and the name was changed to Kitchener, following the death of the earl of Kitchener.

During the latter half of the 19th century and the 20th century, our stock in trade was manufacturing, big and small. We made tires at Uniroyal, shirts at the Arrow factory and Canada's first colour TVs at Electrohome. But when the tide of changing global forces swept across much of North America, Kitchener's industrial sector was hard hit. We saw numerous one-time successful manufacturers shutter their doors. Unwilling to be relegated to the rust belt scrap heap, the dreamers and the doers in Kitchener got to work on a comprehensive action plan. Playing a critical role was our former MPP, John Milloy, who supported Kitchener mayor Carl Zehr and the local council in a bold and daring plan to attract development and create jobs, optimism and momentum.

In 2009, we saw the launch of our life sciences cluster. The Downtown Health Sciences Campus was open for business, consisting of the University of Waterloo school of pharmacy and a satellite school of medicine of McMaster University. These institutions are graduating needed health care professionals—and this has gone a very long way in addressing the doctor shortage in our area—and the new medical cluster has become a magnet for pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies.

1350

Just down the street, a block away, in what used to be a leather-tanning factory, the Communitech Hub is delivering stunning results in the digital media sector. In just five years, this centre of excellence, which helps tech communities start, grow, and succeed, has helped to launch 1,700 new tech companies and thousands of well-paying jobs.

Each of these companies has between three to five employees, so do the math on that see how many jobs have been created. From one-person tech start-ups to large global players such as Google, Desire2Learn and Christie Digital, these tech businesses have generated more than \$30 billion in revenue.

That is not a bad return on investment. Ontario's Liberal government has invested \$25 million over five years to stimulate the sector. Fostering strategic partnerships is creating new jobs and wealth in our community and in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you about one of these success stories. It belongs to my son Andrew, who is just 26 years old. He graduated at the height of the recession with a degree in computer and video game design, and despite his best efforts he could not find a job anywhere. He sent out hundreds of resumés.

Then he took his ideas to create video games and phone apps into the Communitech Hub. After receiving some mentoring and some excellent coaching and getting connected with the right people, he set out on his own. I'm very happy to report to you that today Andrew's company is one of the rising stars in this nucleus of tech innovation. His downtown Kitchener office has 25 employees, not just in Kitchener but also in a subsidiary office in Los Angeles. His clients include DreamWorks, the Jim Henson Co. and NBCUniversal, just to name a few.

A very small investment in this young man has gone a very long way in creating knowledge-based jobs in our community. Consider that the people whom he is employing now pay rent. They buy houses. They buy cars. They get oil changes. They buy groceries. They buy running shoes for their kids. They are reinvesting in the community where we live. His father and I are very proud of him.

Adding to the innovation cluster is our commitment to clean technology. Kitchener has always been a leader in its concern for preserving our environment. We were the first community in Canada to implement the Blue Box recycling program, back in 1983.

Our “Go Green!” philosophy promotes walking and cycling and the redevelopment of once-empty factories—and we had many of them. We’re turning these old factories into housing. This is a prime example of recycling that is transforming our city core. The Kaufman rubber factory, which once made rubber boots, is now an upscale condo development. The old Arrow factory, where they made men’s shirts, is now also a condominium development.

We know that if we are going to attract investors and high-calibre talent to live and work in our community, we need to improve transit. With support from the province, residents of Kitchener and Waterloo region are soon going to see the implementation of a light-rail transit system, and we’re very excited about this.

The LRT has been on the drawing board for over a decade, and I’m told that, in the very near future, we are going to see groundbreaking for this world-class transit system. It’s going to serve as a catalyst for downtown intensification. Fewer cars on the road mean less traffic and cleaner air.

All-day, two-way GO train service between Kitchener and the Toronto area is certain to be a game-changer. Rather than facing the traffic-choked Highway 401, where hours are lost every day in gridlock, travelling by train will not only make good economic sense for businesses but it’s going to help people to regain precious time being lost in our lives. We all have appointments to keep and people we’d rather be with.

We also look forward to breaking ground in 2015 for the new four-lane Highway 7 between Kitchener and Guelph.

The people who are working diligently to maintain a strong economic presence in Kitchener Centre are also committed to supporting culture. We have a rich arts scene with an abundance of talent. Most people in Ontario know about Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest, a nine-day celebration based on the original German festival—

Applause.

Ms. Daiene Vernile:—I’m getting a bit of applause there—the largest event of its kind in North America. Our long-time cultural heritage in Kitchener is centre stage as everyone becomes a little bit Bavarian during the festivities. Oktoberfest also features a nationally televised parade, which airs on Thanksgiving Day.

There are numerous other cultural attractions. We’re home to the Kitchener Blues Festival, the Homer Watson gallery, the KW symphony and the Centre in the Square performing arts centre.

One of the biggest annual cultural events in Kitchener is the multicultural festival, which we just had in June, where thousands of people gather in our downtown Victoria Park to celebrate cultural diversity. We have one of Canada’s largest multicultural communities, with almost a quarter of our population born outside of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I count my own family among this group. It was in the late 1950s that my parents, Carmine

and Antonietta Vernile, emigrated from southern Italy to Canada. They were in their early 20s and they had very little money in their pockets. In fact, I think my dad says he had about 50 bucks in his back pocket when they arrived. They heard that Canada was a land of opportunity, so like thousands of other people who immigrated here, they made the long journey to the shores of this country, hoping to find a better life for themselves and their children.

My parents arrived in the north end of Toronto, because that is where other family had settled. With only grade school education to serve them, my father worked in construction all his life, and my mother toiled away in a dry cleaner’s, pressing shirts for 18 years—this was before air conditioning. She also cleaned houses, and she held various factory jobs.

We were very poor in those early days. My two older sisters and I wore second-hand clothes that my mother picked up at church rummage sales. While our Canadian neighbours were annoyed by the dandelions in their yards, we spent hours picking these weeds, called “cicoria,” and we dined on them.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: That’s right.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you very much.

Those same neighbours must have wondered why our entire yard was plowed over and turned into a vegetable garden, and why we challenged suburban bylaws by keeping live chickens and rabbits in our backyard. The simple answer was: to feed ourselves.

These very early experiences with poverty became very foundational elements in my life, helping me to shape my values, my views and personal motives.

When I went off to elementary school, like many other immigrant children, I did not speak a word of English. But with the support of caring teachers in Ontario’s excellent education system, we soon learned that Canada was indeed the land of opportunity. Our education system is the cornerstone that empowers young people with knowledge and confidence to help them tackle every challenge in life. At school, we were all equal—equal to learn, equal to set goals and, through hard work and dedication, equal to achieve any dream. How many other places in the world can make this claim?

My dream was to become the first member of my family to attend post-secondary education. This was a pretty lofty dream, considering my father only had a grade 5 education, and my mother, grade 3. The war had cut short their education. So off I went to Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo to study history and politics, juggling four jobs in order to pay for tuition, books, and to keep a roof over my head. With no financial support from my family, the financial picture at times was very grim; but I knew I’d get through it, and it was thrilling to be there and to be learning at a higher level.

My first job as a broadcast journalist was with multicultural CHIN Radio. After a few months reporting in the newsroom, I was appointed to the station’s Queen’s Park legislative reporting position. I sat right behind you in that media gallery, reporting on the daily

events. I never would have imagined back then that I would one day be here in the House, sitting as a member—and it is humbling.

After CHIN Radio came an offer to work for an ABC affiliate TV station in south Texas. That was such an interesting experience, and it showed me more than ever that aside from the weather, Canada, with its tolerance and compassionate social programs, was where I wanted to live.

Returning to Ontario to work for CTV in Kitchener, back then called CKCO-TV, it was a great privilege for 29 years to produce and anchor an award-winning weekly news program. From this perch in Kitchener, I was able to interview Prime Ministers, Premiers and even some American Presidents. Our reports covered issues like politics, business, education, health care and more.

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But the stories that were the most gratifying were those where we were able to improve someone's life by putting the spotlight on an inequality or a social injustice. Our report on a church community cupboard for the poor brought in a flood of donations which were very much needed at the time. We reported on a downtown soup kitchen requiring a washer and a dryer, and the very next day after the story aired, an anonymous donor provided the needed appliances. An interview with a woman who was dealing with breast cancer, who was humiliated inside a driver's licence renewal office when she was made to take her hat off for a picture revealing her hairless head, prompted me to call the then transportation minister. He offered an apology on the air, and she got to retake her picture after her hair grew back. This is what drew me to a career in journalism: knowing that you can use the media pulpit to bring awareness and to create change.

There are some who might see journalists and politicians as natural enemies. It's often a blood sport, with the two sides very suspicious of each other. Yet at the very core, reporters and elected officials want the same thing, and that is to help people. Reporters do it by reporting on important information and educating the public. Politicians help the public by passing policies and laws which allow people to live their lives in dignity.

When the opportunity came a few months ago to run in Kitchener Centre, my first concern was, would I be able to live up to the legacy of John Milloy? In the 11 years that he served, John secured for our community a new courthouse; a new shelter for abused women; extensive funding for our two local hospitals in the region, our two universities, Conestoga College, support for the Centre for International Governance Innovation, for the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics, for the Institute for Quantum Computing; and as I mentioned previously, a new school of pharmacy, a new medical school, funding for the LRT and GO train service—such great accomplishments by one person in one riding.

Mr. Speaker, for me it came down to the core values of the party I was about to join, the integrity of the leader and the ideas moving forward. I had a chance to speak

personally with Kathleen Wynne, and she shared with me her vision for creating a strong and compassionate Ontario. It was very inspiring. As a cynical old reporter, I will say that I'm not inspired by a whole lot of things these days, but I was inspired by Kathleen Wynne.

I've also been inspired by my wonderful husband, John Matlock, and our three children, Andrew, Curtis and Claire. You heard me talk about Andrew. Our middle child, Curtis, recently graduated from the Royal Military College in Kingston with a degree in political science. He has just accepted an offer to go to law school in England. Our daughter, Claire, who is also studying at the Royal Military College in Kingston, has just finished her second year in English literature. She is an infantry reservist in the Armed Forces of Canada.

It was my family that strongly urged me to pursue this opportunity, and in particular, it was the kids who told me not to be risk-averse. This is a message in our family that has come full circle. When our children were younger, on many occasions I encouraged them not to be fearful of new experiences, like the time that I signed us up to volunteer at the St. John's soup kitchen in Kitchener. It's a drop-in centre that feeds 300 people in need every day. I've never forgotten the early struggles of our family, with my parents trying to put food on the table, so this seemed like a natural fit for our family when it came to volunteering. On Thursday afternoons for over a decade, our family would slice carrots, peel potatoes and do whatever else they asked us to do to help prepare the meal for the next day. Social justice is a very important value in my family.

It is encouraging to see in the throne speech a commitment to introduce a new poverty reduction strategy within 60 days. The Breaking the Cycle plan has lifted 47,000 children out of poverty in this province, and the recent increases to the Ontario Child Benefit and the minimum wage, with annual increases indexed to inflation, aim to ensure that low-income families do not fall further behind.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you that as a broadcast journalist, I covered elections for over three decades and I thought I understood the complexities involved. However, when you are the candidate at the centre of the events, it's a whole other matter. When we launched into the campaign, my husband and kids and the extended Matlock family worked tirelessly until the very end. Our outgoing MPP, John Milloy, canvassed by my side, and, in an ironic twist of events, role-played with me, with him acting as the aggressive reporter and me trying to answer his blistering questions.

Leading the charge in our election campaign was a team of passionate volunteers who put in long hours, plotted our strategy and worked tirelessly to win every vote. I was humbled by their unwavering dedication every day. And on election night it was overwhelming to see such strong support from the residents of Kitchener Centre, who chose a more positive vision for the future. I was very worried about this election. I was looking at some of the polls in the days leading up to election day.

My campaign team ordered me to stop looking at these polls because it was very tight. However, on election night—I'm going to use their words, Mr. Speaker—they said, "Daiene, it's a landslide." So thank you to all the voters in Kitchener Centre who voted for us.

By allowing me to serve over the next four years as their member of provincial Parliament, my goal is to represent their interests and their needs. Although we are fortunate to live in a province with so many advantages and opportunities, I believe that we can still do better. People are demanding that we manage their tax dollars more effectively. Believe me, I heard that, while knocking on doors, from many, many voters in Kitchener Centre. But they also want the fair delivery of services that allow them to live their lives in dignity, and they don't want to see any sector of our workforce demonized.

We need to strike a balance and we need to strive toward our mandate: building Ontario up. There are so many things that we need to build in my riding and across the province, starting with every child's potential, competitive businesses, new transit, a more comfortable retirement for all seniors, and a fair and inclusive society. We've all heard Premier Kathleen Wynne say that government can be a force for good in people's lives. I stand before you here today as living proof of the possibilities. My life started out in poverty, and I struggled with language and cultural barriers, but hopefully I've become a person who has benefited from Ontario's many opportunities. I'm honoured to serve in this government and I hope to continue adding value in this great province.

I want to thank you for the time to speak and I thank the good people of Kitchener Centre for their support.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Northumberland—Quinte West.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Thank you, Speaker, and again congratulations to you. I'm sure you'll do a fantastic job. It's good to see you back.

It looks like we have part of the Italian caucus here today on this inaugural day of speaking in the House.

I want to thank the member from Kitchener Centre for sharing her time with me today on this very, very important occasion.

First of all, Speaker, I need to thank my family for allowing me to be back here, because it doesn't matter what we think or what we do, but it's a whole team effort. Without their support, I'm not sure I'd be here today.

Some business before I get into it: I need to thank my wife, of course, as well as thanking my family, but also wish her a happy birthday tomorrow. I'm not going to say the number, Speaker, because I'm not sure that she would appreciate that. But anyway, happy birthday. We'll see you tomorrow when you get down here.

And the rest of my family, Speaker: my oldest daughter, who is a teacher, and her husband, Curt, and their two kids, Jordan and Aly; my oldest son, who lives in Windsor with his wife, Julie, and three kids, three more of my grandkids, Lucas, Madelin and Monica; my

son Mark, who actually lives about five doors away from where we live, and his wife, Angie, and their two kids, Nathan and A.J.—Anthony; and last, but not least, my son Matt and his wife, Lindsay, with their two kids, Morgan and Maddox. I told them to stop because I couldn't afford Christmas anymore, after having nine grandkids.

1410

Speaker, this is somewhat different than most other members in this House because I'm not sure if I'm new or recycled or old, but one thing I can tell you for sure is—

Interjection: You're here.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'm here, and I'm just delighted.

A little bit about myself—for some of the people in this House, this might be boring, but it's worth repeating. I, too, was an immigrant. I came to Canada in 1960 with my mother and my sister. My father came in 1959. Like most other immigrants, my father worked in construction.

Actually, my father was able to get a home in Woodbridge, but Woodbridge in 1960 was open fields and farms. We got here in the first part of February. In the part of Italy I came from, we had never really seen much snow, but it was as high as the farm fences. I actually walked to school, about two miles, and yes, it was a one-room schoolhouse and I didn't speak any English. I could count, though; I could count. Math was okay.

I think my father really felt sorry for us, so come that summer, we moved to where most Italians who moved close to Toronto moved to: It was Toronto. I was able to attend school and go to new-Canadians classes and slowly picked up English. We became more and more Canadian every day, although I really cherish my heritage, which I will never forget.

I was fortunate; with not a lot of education—back then, it was challenging for new Canadians—my mother worked in a factory making little metal parts and got her hands dirty every day. But I did go to high school. I did become an auto mechanic, and I've been self-employed pretty well all my life around the automotive industry. We made a living; we raised our family. For the last 34 years we've lived in Brighton, which is, of course, in the great riding of Northumberland—Quinte West. We have a family business that one of my kids is slowly taking over, and that's a speedway where they race cars every Saturday night. So we do make some noise. But it's something that I'm very, very fortunate one of my kids was able to pick up where I'm leaving off. They're doing, as I said, a great, great job.

Speaker, I just want to focus a little bit on being here. As I said before, I'm an immigrant; my wife is Canadian. It's a real privilege to be here. Sometimes, I guess, as you get a little bit older, you become more cognizant of these things, so I just want to paint a little bit of a picture. Back in Italy, during World War II, my father was a prisoner of the Allied forces. I married my wife, Diane. Her father was a veteran of World War II. I often wonder if my father was a prisoner of my father-in-law. It kind of gives

you a little bit of a chill, but it's reality. My father was lost for about five years during World War II, but then he came home, and that's why I'm here.

I guess what I'm getting at is, this is a fantastic country. It's a great province. I have parents and my wife has parents both from different backgrounds during World War II, but I'm here to sit in this House today. I was able to be a municipal politician for some 12 years, both as mayor and council member.

Speaker, we live in the best country of the world, bar none. We do have challenges—we certainly do—but I think challenges give us Canadians the drive to make this a better country, a better province, a better community. Certainly it's something that will be with me forever.

June 12—well, let's roll back a bit. In October 2011, after spending eight years in this place—people spoke of my riding—by a very small amount, I wasn't able to return here. But what encouraged me to try again is that, a couple of months after I lost that election, over 300 people showed up at a gathering to honour me, and it was very, very moving. These folks said, "Yes, you lost the election. You're gone. You're finished," but about 300 people paid some money to host an event to honour the work I was able to do as an MPP for eight years. Once again, it was one of those moments that was quite touching. I had pretty well all of the municipal leaders, and other agencies attended, and friends. I made a statement that day. I lost by 700 votes, so I said to those folks out there, "I could've saved you some money tonight if each one of you could have had two more votes." Anyway, they took that to heart, and they never relinquished it. I made a comment that night in my remarks, after hearing a number of accolades, that I wasn't bound to go away. I've lived in the community for over 30 years. I raised my family there. My business was there. I wasn't going to go away. "The sun will rise someday." It wasn't the end of the world. It wasn't going to be dark.

Speaker, fast-forward to June 2012 and the time leading up to it. I want to thank the fantastic team who rallied around me. I normally don't like to name names, but there are some times when you're going to name names. I'll probably forget, but I want to thank Elaine Palmateer and Bruce Davis, the co-chairs of my campaign, with big help from Michael Gray, Charrissa McQuaig and about 300 to 350 others—a team of volunteers who were out there to support and get me back to this place.

I've got to tell you a little story, Mr. Speaker. I was in Port Hope campaigning one day, knocking on doors. I was supposed to have about five people come with me, which is always about the norm.

By the way, we have five campaign offices. Each community—we cannot leave them alone. We have to cater to them. I insist that we do that.

Twelve people showed up to knock on doors with me. I was overwhelmed. So we thought we'd take a group picture, and the street we were going to start campaigning on was right behind the police station in Port Hope.

Obviously, they saw these 12 people walking down a residential street—

Interjection.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I think they got worried, so a Port Hope police officer came around the block once and came around the block twice, and I said, "Hmm." The third time, I stopped them. I said, "It's okay. It's only us. We're campaigning." He said, "Well, I thought you were, but we're just making sure the community is safe." It was interesting. So we split up, but we did have a good day.

We had a fantastic campaign. Like my colleague from Kitchener Centre, I couldn't help but see those polls on the front page of the paper—although I really didn't want to look at them—but that's not the message I was getting at the door. It got a bit confusing, because the front page of the paper would say something and I was hearing something different. I thought maybe I was confused.

But on election night I was relieved when, under the leadership of Premier Wynne, we formed a majority government. I tell you, that was a relief and a feeling that made it all worthwhile. Those long days of walking the streets of all the communities in the riding—some 12-hour days—really, really paid off.

Just to focus on that: We don't have specific records, but I believe we knocked on about 98% of the households in the five urban centres. In the five urban centres, we hit every door—

Interjections.

1420

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: So, Speaker, as I said before, when some folks honoured me back in December 2003, in 2011, after losing the election, I wasn't going to go away. I was very, very fortunate, by Premier McGuinty then and then followed by Premier Wynne, that they asked me to do some outreach in rural Ontario. We faced reality. We only had a couple of members from rural Ontario. I volunteered my time to do some outreach to help the party rebuild in rural Ontario, Speaker, and it was a great opportunity to still meet people, all different groups, both within the party and outside the party. They offered an enormous amount of ideas, and hopefully, as I fed them up the chain—I think some of the results were seen during our platform. So for me that was great.

But at the same time, most of the people that I dealt with, whether it was mayors, agency leaders that I had the privilege to interact with in a professional sense as an MPP—they still came to me for help and assistance, so you kind of felt you never left. It was really, really fantastic to stay connected. I think that helped me during the campaign because I knew what some of those needs of the communities were. I knew what potential venues we could take care of at Queen's Park if I was fortunate enough to be re-elected, what we could do. It was an awesome experience to do those kind of things, and I certainly enjoyed it.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to spend some time to talk about the great communities that I represent. As I said before, during the campaign, we had five campaign offices, in each urban centre. I'll start with Port Hope.

Port Hope is a great community. All the communities are great communities; we're very, very lucky. Northumberland—Quinte West has boundaries to the west, which is Durham, Newcastle—not counting Newcastle. To the south is Lake Ontario, to the north is Rice Lake, and to the east it's just past the Trent River to Loyalist road. We're right on the lakeshore, we're right on the 401, we're right on the VIA, so it truly is the centre of the universe. I don't want to offend anybody, but it is.

In Port Hope, we've always worked very, very closely. A couple of things that come to mind in Port Hope is that during a previous government, they lost their driver test centre, the only one that was close, within probably 50 or 60 miles. Whether you were a youth trying to get your licence or a senior who had to go through the testing to make sure that you could retain your licence, they would have to go to Peterborough, Oshawa or Belleville. It took a little while, but then, under Minister of Transport Wynne, now Premier Wynne, we were able to re-establish that driver test centre.

Speaker, I can't help but tell you a story about the driver test centre. We had an elderly lady from Bewdley, which is in the north end of the riding near Rice Lake, who had lost her licence through—I won't go into details why she lost her licence, but I know she was having a good time. So she had to do a test. We knew that a driver test centre was going to come back to Port Hope, and Port Hope to Bewdley is only about five or six—well, maybe seven or eight—kilometres. But she didn't want to go to Peterborough or Oshawa or Belleville. I mean, she was in her eighties. We kept telling her, "Well, hold on tight. We'll see what we can do." The day that we knew that we were going to re-open this driver test centre, we said, "We're going to"—I won't mention her name because the family wanted to keep it a little bit private. We said, "What a great way if we can get Mrs. So-and-So to come and be the first person to come to the centre." We thought it was a real win. I personally phoned her house. A gentleman answered the phone. I found out later on it was her son. I told him the good news, and he says, "Lou, I really, really thank you, but Mom should not be driving, so I'm not going to tell her the good news." But anyway, the centre has been well received, and it adds, certainly, service not only to Port Hope but the surrounding areas.

In Port Hope, we were also very successful to tackle a number of projects—in fairness, with the help of the federal government and the municipality: a number of water projects and a number of brand new sewage treatment plants, things that that community really needed drastically.

Then there's the municipality of Cobourg. Cobourg once again has a fantastic waterfront, a downtown on the beach. You couldn't ask for much better, with a beautiful marina park. It's just a phenomenal community, a vibrant downtown, a very historic town hall. One of the things that Cobourg needed was a community centre of some magnitude. They had a hockey rink that was quite old. Once again, with the help of the federal government, I was able, from the provincial side, to come up with about

\$10 million in partnership with the federal government and the community. They now have a state-of-the-art community centre: two hockey rinks, an indoor walking track, meeting rooms and basketball courts—you name it.

But I guess one of the things that former Mayor Delanty—he wanted to leave a legacy; he wasn't going to run for mayor again, back, I believe it was, in—well, the last election, the municipal election of 2010. He wanted an outdoor skating rink. He had been working on this thing forever.

Interjection: Peter.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Peter, my good friend Peter Delanty.

So through some programs that we had here provincially, we were able to obtain just over \$1 million. Frankly, the community was a bit divided. Why would he spend this money? So the unofficial title of this outdoor rink became "the frink." But you know what's interesting is that once that was up and running and you see all these kids and adults and couples in the middle of the day skating on this beautiful outdoor rink, it became the talk of the town. I remember being at a meeting with different mayors of different communities and they said, "So when can we get an outdoor rink?" Because it really became a hub for downtown Cobourg, which lasted—it's still there. In the summertime, it's a beautiful fountain. It really added to the community.

The municipality of Trent Hills, which most people might refer to as Campbellford before the amalgamation of the different municipalities—the Trent water system goes right through Campbellford, a beautiful part of the province.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Hector Macmillan—great mayor.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: A great mayor, Hector. I must say that Mayor Macmillan has some health issues but he's doing well.

Hon. Jeff Leal: We wish him well.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: We wish him well. He's doing quite well. I know he's going to be a candidate again.

It's a very scenic part of the province. As you go through some of the locks, it really is magnificent.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Empire Cheese.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Excellent. Thanks, Minister Leal. Some of the best cheese—one of the few local cheese makers in the community.

And then, of course, the municipality that I moved to, Brighton, back in 1980. Once again, it's got Presqu'ile Provincial Park, with beaches equivalent to any Florida beach—a very long beach area. There's camping. What makes it very unique: On the east shore is a residential component, with over 100 homes and cottages. Mind you, most of the cottages are now disappearing, with grandiose homes, because it's right on Brighton bay. Once again, it's a great, great community. Of course, they benefited from some of the programs I was able to tap into here at Queen's Park, whether it was a community centre, a number of road projects and on and on.

Hon. Jeff Leal: What about the EODF?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: EODF. That's economic development. We'll get to that.

I must not forget about the great city of Quinte West and Mayor Williams. I've got to say this about Mayor Williams. I shouldn't single him out, but Mayor Williams ran provincially in 2003 against a good member, Ernie Parsons, and John did run for the Conservatives. His words, not mine: He got his you-know-what kicked.

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Interjection: He lost.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: He lost. But we've become good friends. We put politics aside, and Mayor Williams and I work very, very well together. Unfortunately, he has decided not to run again this year. I think the city of Quinte West is going to miss him. He's a very, very committed mayor. He gets things done. I think I was on speed dial with him.

After going through amalgamation about 15 years ago, the city of Quinte West has been struggling. They wanted a YMCA. The previous mayors in previous councils were successful, and some four or five years ago, we were able to help them with some \$4 million towards a new building. It's a fantastic facility.

I must say that I was able to work very closely with Mayor Williams. As we speak today, the shovel is in the ground to build a new marina right at the mouth of the Trent water system.

Hon. Jeff Leal: You worked on that too.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: We did. It's a beautiful marina. It's at the mouth of the Trent system. Their marina wasn't all that great. It was there for a long time. So this is a brand new establishment that they're hoping to—they're doing all of the dredging as we speak. Sometime next summer, it should be open.

Interjection: Tell them about Port Hope.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Well, I spoke about Port Hope. You weren't listening.

Interjections.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: We did.

Interjection.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: West to east.

So, Speaker, a couple of things: One, I am so delighted to be here with Premier Wynne and the rest of our Liberal caucus. My beliefs and what the Premier believes in and the rest of the caucus really line up.

When we talk about the \$2.5-billion commitment to help industry expand, it reminds me of back in 2007. With good help from my good friend Minister Leal from Peterborough and some other rural caucus members from the east, we were able to bring to the platform for the election in 2007 an idea that we needed to spur economic development in eastern Ontario. There was an ask of some \$20 million a year.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Only 20. It was the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: That's right. Well, they gave us the idea, frankly, right? The wardens—they wanted some to stimulate the economy in eastern Ontario. So it was part of our platform in 2007, for a four-year sort of commit-

ment, and then we'll revisit it. Well, it worked so well. It worked so well that in 2011 it was expanded—well, not expanded. Western Ontario has their \$20 million for western Ontario economic development.

The number of jobs that it has created, the number of jobs that it has retained—it's hard to measure specifically, because if it wasn't in place, what would happen? I'm delighted that in 2011 it was made permanent. Although the opposition didn't support it—I don't know why they didn't support it, because a lot of their ridings benefited from it. We tend to forget just the fact that whether we're just going to lower taxes or do away with those investments, that it's like a magic wand; things happen. Well, we played that record before. We played that movie before. It didn't work.

I think industry is very, very appreciative when governments are there to help—not to interfere, but to help. I think that's what our government has been doing for the last 11 or 12 years—

Hon. Jeff Leal: What about that big company in Trent—GlobalMed?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: GlobalMed; world-renowned for products in the medical field. They do business right across the world, frankly—very, very renowned. Minister Leal was there to make an announcement, which was fantastic.

So I think those are the things that sometimes, when we're in this place—we tend to forget what it's like out there. This is why it's so important—just as a suggestion to members—that we not lose touch with the people who put us here. I always say, it doesn't matter what I do or I think; I have to think about what the people tell me in the street, whether it's walking in downtown Cobourg, downtown Brighton or downtown Quinte West. It doesn't matter how smart or not smart we might be in this place. I always say, whenever I meet with folks, "I need your help"—because I do not wake up in the middle of the night with fabulous ideas. Those ideas come from Mr. and Mrs. Smith or Mr. and Mrs. Forch, who always give good advice. I think it's very, very critical that we don't lose that point of contact.

Speaker, it is humbling to be here. I have the experience of being here eight years. Sometimes we forget who brought us here, why we're here. We get hung up with some procedural wrangling or hearing bells ring, which is, frankly, a waste of time.

I remember being elected in 2003. I think some of the folks who were here then will remember sitting until midnight, bells ringing. I never forget a piece of advice from my good friend Rick Bartolucci, who just left us a few months ago—right behind me here in the members' gallery. I think it was about 11 o'clock one night. I was so frustrated and I said, "Why am I here? I could be doing a lot more constructive things than putting up with bells during the day, stretching out debates that aren't necessary." I remember Rick putting his arm over my shoulder and saying, "Lou, you look frustrated." I was very frustrated and, frankly, thought I'd made a mistake by being elected to be here. This was about the first

month we were here. He said, "Just remember one thing: Whenever you get that frustrated"—and I never forgot this—"Lou, you are one of 107 people across the province of Ontario who are privileged to be here to make decisions that will impact all Ontarians for years to come."

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Out of 13 million.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Out of 13 million people.

When I think back to full-day JK—I was part of the team here when we voted for that, along with this side of the House, to support—when we talk about the Eastern Ontario Development Fund and the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund, sometimes we take those things for granted. I have three hospitals in my riding; only one had a CAT scan; now all three have a CAT scan. One of them has an MRI—unheard of in rural Ontario. Family health teams—as mayor of Brighton, I had the foresight, along with some community leaders—not me; some community leaders. One of the challenges was that doctors were disappearing at a rate that airlines could not keep them from flying out of Ontario—and nurses. We in Brighton, when I was mayor—a group established a non-profit organization that we called the family health centre. We built a building to entice doctors to come, with no help from any government. As mayor, I approached the member at that time, Dr. Galt—

Hon. Jeff Leal: Doug Galt, a veterinarian.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: That's right—to see if we could get some help from the government of the day. Frankly, there was none. But then, under Minister Smitherman, the Minister of Health, we talked about how we could improve things in the health field in rural Ontario. I won't take the credit for it, but we came out with family health teams. I was honoured and privileged to have Premier McGuinty and Minister Smitherman open the very first health team in Brighton. We had this beautiful building. We now have five doctors and all the allied services that go along with it. Yes, there's still a little bit, in some pockets, of a doctor shortage: People don't have a doctor until they need one, and that's when we find out that we might have a shortage.

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We kept track of phone calls to our offices, when I got elected, based on subjects, on needs. The number one call we had—we have two constituency offices. In both offices it was, "We just moved from Markham," or Newmarket, or whatever urban centre. "We've been here five years. We're now 80," or 85, "and we're still driving to see our family doctor in Newmarket," or Vaughan or Toronto, or whatever it was. "We can't do that anymore." That was our number one call, that they couldn't find a local doctor. So fast-forward, and we now have—I saw a sign at the family health unit; that's where my doctor is in Brighton, and they're affiliated with the family health team in Quinte West and Trenton—that the family health team in Trenton is looking for patients. I thought I'd never live the day to see that. In Belleville, there's a number of doctors who are looking for patients. I never

thought I'd live the day to see that. So we've come a long way.

It really hurt when, during this last campaign, we heard the platform of the opposition that they were going to fire 100,000 people. And, miraculously, they were going to have a million jobs. It just didn't make sense. So we've come a long way, I think, under the leadership of Premier Wynne and cabinet and the whole of caucus; I think we're all united in this. We cannot afford to turn Ontario back to where it was some 11 or 12 years ago. I heard that at the doors.

Were people happy with everything we're putting forward? We have to be realistic as well. There were some challenges. But I think people actually weighed both sides of the equation, right? I think for a lot of them it wasn't too difficult, frankly, to decide to choose us. I think the commitment we need to make is that we live up to those commitments that we made. Also, I think there are going to be some challenges in some of the issues. That's what I heard at the door, and I'm sure everybody heard, that before we finalize those things we need to hear back from those folks, now that we have a majority government, now that we have formed government again, to make sure that we line up issues to the best of our ability.

I'll tell you one thing: People understand that we have challenges; they really do. One of my sayings has always been, even in the days I spent in the municipal sector, when someone approached me with the issue—to them that's a very important issue; that's why they're coming to us, right? I would always say, "So help me out here. How would you fix it?" It is easy to complain, "I don't like the colour," or whatever. I go, "So what colour would be best?" Normally, they would have a suggestion. But you know, if we are able to explain that maybe it is a good suggestion but because of A, B, C and D it didn't quite fit the equation, they would understand that. They would understand, whether it's financial issues or whatever the case may be.

I think if we're honest with people, if we tell our story, if we express where we want to go—because people are also patient. That's one of the things that I actually sold during the campaign. What we're saying is not for next year; it's not for the next four years; it's a 10- or 12-year plan. The eight years I spent down here, I never heard of that before. This is very, very encouraging. As a municipal leader—and I know there are lots of municipal folks here—when we met with the province we used to say, "We just can't fly by the seat of our pants anymore. We need to be able to plan." Because normally you can save some money when you plan. I think the direction that we're taking is a phenomenal direction. But we need those partners to work with, whether it's municipally, whether it's the health care sector or the economic development sector, whatever that might be.

One of the things I found out when I was doing outreach for the Premier's office was that people were really happy that somebody was asking them, "So what do you think?"—to be part of the process. They understood that

we could not satisfy all those needs, too. They really did understand. But one of the comments that I used to get whenever I met with chambers of commerce or agricultural groups was, "So you're here to listen to me, and you're going to tell this to somebody in government?" I said, "Of course; that's what I'm here for." "Well, that's never happened before." That's something that, for the next four years, in the riding of Northumberland—Quinte West I'm going to keep on doing.

I was doing that before, but that just kind of reinforced that we need to do more, because a lot of good ideas come from the grassroots. They come from the folks that we in this room collectively have the privilege to represent. They really depend on us. The direction we've taken, being back here 20 days after an election is unheard of—and the commitments we're making.

Speaker, it has been about half an hour. I think I've said enough. I see you're still awake, and I would certainly like to keep you that way. Thank you for listening to a few words I have to say.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table the 2012-13 annual report of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth.

Further debate? I'm pleased to recognize the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If it was parliamentary, I would certainly emphasize "interim" leader, but I know there is no such term here in the House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations on your re-election and on your selection from our caucus to continue in your role as an Acting Speaker representing our caucus. Congratulations to you on that. And thank you to my colleagues and my colleagues across the way.

I intend to share my time in my response to the speech from the throne, splitting it with colleagues Christine Elliott, Lisa MacLeod and John Yakabuski, the honourable members from Whitby—Oshawa, Nepean—Carleton and Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

Thursday's speech from the throne was a moment of truth for Ontario. We had all hoped that there would be some indication that the government has a plan to deal with the problems hurting people in all parts of our province.

Last May was the 89th consecutive month our province's unemployment rate has been higher than the national average. I don't think I'm going out on a limb when I predict that this pattern will only continue if we don't change direction.

Our energy rates are the highest in North America. That's driving business and investment out of Ontario and putting the squeeze on hard-working families and especially our seniors on fixed incomes.

Our debt rating outlook has changed from stable to negative, and soon the Liberals will be underfunding more vital services—like they already are with home care, physiotherapy and nursing—to pay for higher interest costs on their irresponsible debt. The government

is clearly living beyond its means, but interest rates today are at 20-year lows; they can only go up. It matters because each point increase in interest rates on the debt of almost \$300 billion by the end of this year could add a minimum of \$3 billion in annual interest payments, which would severely cripple Ontario's ability to deliver services.

It's plain for anyone to see that we face a dangerous amount of financial risk in this province. Servicing the debt is already the province's third-largest expenditure, and it's about to go up if this government stubbornly reintroduces the same budget that they introduced in this House on May 1, which continues the failed policies that brought us into today's debt and jobs crisis.

Who will suffer from this unrealistic and unaffordable path that the media have astutely described as a "fiscal fairy tale"? It will be the young, the disabled, the poor, the disadvantaged, the needy and the vulnerable all across Ontario, as front-line services are put in jeopardy. Families in every part of this province will be hurt.

Peter Wallace, the chief civil servant who just stepped down last month, warned the government that its plans will mean slashing services. Moody's Investors Service warns that the province is facing a greater challenge to return to balanced outcomes than previously anticipated. BlackRock, the world's largest money manager, said it was on "high alert" for a downgrade.

But it's not just impartial advice and warnings the Liberal government has failed to heed. Donna Cansfield, a former cabinet minister and long-serving Liberal MPP, warned in May—in a refreshing spate of openness and honesty—that the province is in deep trouble.

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The member from Mississauga—Erindale showed great candour when he ran for the leadership of the Liberal Party, and I hope he has the courage to stand behind his comments today. He quite rightly warned that if Ontario's deficit were left unchecked, it would "stifle both foreign and domestic investment into our economy." The Ontario PC caucus is in full agreement with this statement, and the following statements, where he went on to say:

"This accumulating debt is also an unfair burden on our children and grandchildren, a burden we must address for our immediate and future economic prosperity.

"Balancing the budget is the most important way we can grow our economy as well as bringing prosperity to Ontario."

I certainly agree with Mr. Takhar.

Even Dwight Duncan, Dalton McGuinty's former finance minister, warned this government, a week before it introduced a budget with a higher deficit, that Ontario was faced with a staggering debt, and that the low interest rates of 2013 were "a ticking time bomb" ready to explode. Already, Ontario's borrowing costs have spiked to a six-month high the day following the last election, just last June 13.

Despite all the evidence and advice, this government has decided that there's no need to detail how they will

magically balance the budget to protect front-line services. In fact, they have decided to double down on debt.

The Premier downplayed the debt hole, the finance minister advised that no one was freaking, and the President of the Treasury Board says that she isn't worried about it. These denials of reality all remind me of their constant reassurances that we should all trust them when they claimed that the gas plant scandal cost taxpayers \$40 million, when it really cost at least \$1.1 billion.

This government still will not answer how they can possibly balance the budget by spending \$12.5 billion more than taxpayers can already afford. Spending \$12.5 billion that we don't have, and which will cost all Ontarians more in future taxes and service cuts, is not an investment, as the Premier likes to say. It's a crippling burden on all businesses and families in Ontario.

Not only is the government promising the impossible—balancing the budget by spending more money we don't have—it is in absolute denial that it bears full responsibility for the situation that it has dragged all of us into. We keep hearing the same excuses: "Blame the feds. Blame the economic environment"—anyone but the Liberal government of the past 11 years.

A study from the School of Public Policy, released last week, took a look at the root causes of debt accumulation across Canada. The report concludes that Ontario is in much worse shape than Quebec, and it's not the fault of external factors. It expressly lays responsibility on bad policy decisions by this Liberal government. Instead of denying responsibility and accountability, this government would be well advised to take the first step towards recovery, by admitting that they have a problem.

It truly worries me that the finance minister believes that the main issue is that "revenue has not met expectations." Does this mean that, along with the inevitable service cuts, we should brace ourselves for even more taxes and fee hikes, because he thinks revenue has not met expectations? Even with the HST, eco-taxes and the so-called health premium—and it goes into general revenue—to name just a few, how much more money is the government going to take away from us, the taxpayers?

It's not like they've used our money wisely: more than a billion dollars in the gas plant scandal; hundreds of millions more on Ornge, eHealth and MaRS. At the same time, we've seen services that vulnerable Ontarians rely on, like physiotherapy, cut, or we see how badly they treated Madi Vanstone, in my riding, who needs medication to live.

We've seen front-line cuts: 40 nursing positions cut in North Bay, 90 nurses put out of work in Ottawa, and 34 nurses shown the door in Windsor, to name just a few. Clearly, it's just the tip of the iceberg. There's a lot more to come, yet this government claims that it needs more money for its activist-centred approach to government. Please, you've been too active with our pocketbooks already, and no one buys your voodoo economics

claiming fiscal restraint when you're spending more money than ever.

The claims of having the leanest government in Canada per capita are a red herring. We should darn well expect that, with the highest provincial population, our per capita expenses have to be lower. Any student taking an introductory economics course—which is as far as I got in economics, Mr. Speaker—would be able to tell you that, of course, per capita costs are lower as population numbers are higher. It costs more money per capita to provide a service to one person than it does per capita to provide that service to 10 people. Please, I say to the government, stop insulting the intelligence of Ontarians with that weak and irrelevant argument that you make.

Instead of initiatives in the throne speech to reduce spending, Ontarians received multiple new spending commitments that we simply cannot afford if you can't find the savings to pay for them.

At the same time, while the Liberal government is being absolutely unrealistic and irresponsible with how they spend our money, they have the nerve to tell Ontarians that the government doesn't trust them to plan their own finances. So they're going to dock your pay-cheques for a pension scheme that won't help anyone, as our economy continues to spiral downward. According to the Fraser Institute, this latest irresponsible scheme means individuals will pay up to \$3,420 more a year in taxes, or nearly \$7,000 for a couple who both work. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business states that 86% of its business members—and most of these are small and medium businesses—are opposed to the idea of the new pension scheme, and 53% expect they will have to reduce staffing if it's implemented. Even the government's own finance officials have warned that the new payroll tax will cost Ontario tens of thousands of jobs. In fact, the document that we received at committee, Mr. Speaker, says that the scheme will cost 150,000 jobs in the province.

What that means is that we will have fewer people working and paying taxes, and those lucky enough to still have a job will be paying more for this government's lack of restraint and failed economic policies. The irony of the Liberals' enforced savings scheme can't be overlooked when the reason average Ontarians can't save for their retirement is that their earnings are being sucked up by skyrocketing hydro bills, HST on everything they buy, higher gasoline bills caused by longer commutes, increasing government fees—all of which are directly caused by the Liberals.

The throne speech leaves many troubling questions as to the direction Ontario is heading. The only thing we know for certain is that all Ontarians will pay the price. Focusing on private sector job creation and balanced budgets is the only way to protect front-line services for all Ontarians. With a debt this large, Ontario will be in real trouble if we continue in this direction. So today I'm calling upon the Premier to show restraint, to rein in her overspending and to protect the front-line services we all depend on, like health care and education.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I am very pleased to rise following our leader, Mr. Wilson, to respond to the speech from the throne as well. But before I do that I would like to say that I'm very honoured to have been returned as the MPP for Whitby–Oshawa, and I would like to thank my constituents for placing their trust in me. I'd also like to thank all other elected members of the Legislature as well.

The Liberals' throne speech, which was delivered on July 3 by our Lieutenant Governor, signals the same unrealistic and unaffordable plan the Liberal government brought forward before the election. It was very clearly stated that the Wynne government intends to reintroduce the budget originally tabled in this chamber on May 1 and anticipates its speedy passage after its introduction on July 14. Mr. Speaker, I have serious concerns with this so-called budget that I would like to discuss in the short time allotted to me this afternoon.

The document introduced on May 1 can only very loosely be described as a budget. In fact, it is really a series of disconnected spending promises that do nothing to help Ontario's economy or help the people of this great province over the long term. Promises contained in the speech signal another era of government living far beyond its means—promises that will threaten our core services and put the things that matter most to Ontarians, like front-line health care and education, in jeopardy. The Liberals' disregard for our economy also threatens the most vulnerable in our society.

The Ontario PC caucus knows the importance of living within our means and balancing the budget so we are able to afford services that matter to Ontarians. As well, a balanced budget allows us to safely invest in infrastructure in our hospitals, schools and transit.

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However, instead of taking the necessary steps to ensure financial security, the Liberal government has chosen to spend without any concept of priorities.

The economic situation in Ontario is dire, Mr. Speaker. It's far worse than most people realize. Our accumulated debt is approaching \$300 billion, while our deficit has increased under the Wynne government to \$12.5 billion. Why does this matter? Well, it matters because the third-largest expenditure in government, after health care and education, is the interest cost on money borrowed from international lenders. Ontario currently spends \$11 billion per year servicing this debt. This money doesn't pay anything on principal, just on interest payments. Can you imagine what investments could be made in health care and education and supports for vulnerable people with \$11 billion a year? It's completely irresponsible to continue this unbridled spending.

As bad as things look now, they're about to get worse. Last week, Moody's changed the outlook for Ontario from stable to negative, after the Wynne government promised to reintroduce the original budget that sent us to the polls. The consequence of a credit downgrade is an

increase in borrowing costs. We know that a 1% increase in interest rates means an additional \$500 million in additional borrowing costs to the province each and every year. We're also experiencing a 20-year low in interest rates, but they have nowhere to go but up. Although it is doubtful that interest rates will rise to the levels of 18% to 20% that we saw in the late 1980s, there is no doubt that rates will increase in the future. The only question is when and how much.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech also outlined the government's intention to balance the budget by 2017-18 without a realistic plan to get to balance. However, the budget contains billions more in spending that we cannot afford. This of course begs the question: What services will the government have to cut to balance the budget, or will they give up on balancing the budget altogether, which is a far more scary prospect? The Ontario PC caucus believes that balancing the budget will grow the economy and attract businesses to come and expand in Ontario. While the Wynne government has increased the public sector, small and big businesses have picked up and moved from Ontario, and we've heard the sad stories over the last few months. We need to create the necessary conditions for these businesses to want to stay. Focusing on private sector job creation will ensure that we can protect our front-line services.

One of the cornerstones of the Liberal government's budget, as mentioned in the throne speech, is the proposed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. This would be phased in over two years, commencing in 2017. Mr. Speaker, the creation of this plan would be a disaster for everyone, from employees to employers and to the government. Several thousand small business owners recently completed a survey by the Ontario branch of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, and a full 86% of them did not support the idea of a provincial pension plan.

It's estimated that Ontario would add about a half percentage point to its unemployment rate if it implemented the ORPP, which is doubly bad considering Ontario has had higher than the national average rate of unemployment over the last five years plus. It would also mean 171,000 person-years of lost work and a permanent drop in wages. Mr. Wilson mentioned that it would cost a couple, where both people worked, about \$7,000 a year. I think this is something that has not been explained to the people of Ontario: that this is going to cost them a significant amount of money. It would be far better for the government to concentrate its efforts on working with the federal government, in looking at enhancements to the CPP at the appropriate time, when our economy is stable. According to Ted Mallett, the vice-president and chief economist of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, "This plan is a whole lot of pain for very little gain." Mr. Speaker, I would agree and I would urge a sober second look at this plan.

The throne speech also promises to build a fairer and healthier Ontario, but as the Ontario PC health critic, I can see that the changes brought forward today by the

Liberals have done nothing to significantly improve our health care system. Mr. Speaker, health care takes roughly 42% of the provincial budget; however, the throne speech did not make reference to the major changes that must occur for our system to be sustainable in the future for our children and grandchildren. Our population is rapidly aging. Children are now taking care of their aging parents, trying to keep them at home as long as possible. We know we can provide home care far more cost-effectively than a hospital. However, in Ontario we're simply not ready for our aging population. The community care access centres that currently provide home care services across Ontario need reform. This was mentioned even just this morning by the member from Dufferin—Caledon in one of her questions. Every day in my community office—and I expect all of the members in this chamber hear the same story—I consistently hear of people waiting months for care, with some people not even qualifying for services that they so clearly need. In addition, I hear stories of individuals only getting one bath a week and personal support workers unable to complete all of their work in the time that they have allocated. We've also seen CCAC—community care access centre—salaries skyrocket in the past few years, with some CEOs seeing a raise of upwards of 144% in the last few years.

That is why, in the last session, I asked the Auditor General to review the spending and practices of all community care access centres across Ontario. And I understand that the Auditor General has undertaken that work and that we will expect to see a report being registered and presented in this chamber early next year.

With more money being directed to front-line care, we will be able to keep seniors in their own homes longer and safely. For those who are unable to remain in their own homes, however, long-term-care homes are the best solution. However, I also consistently hear concerns throughout the province that we do not have a sufficient number of long-term-care placements in many of the communities across Ontario, and even where there are placements, many of them are not up to the standards that individuals and families would expect. In addition, we do not have the proper dementia strategy in Ontario, including safe practices and proper staffing in long-term-care homes. Mr. Speaker, as our population continues to age, we've seen dementia and Alzheimer numbers skyrocket. Not only is the staff in our long-term-care homes at risk of violence, but other patients are as well. This government must address the need for proper training and increasing the number of staff to prevent such problems in our long-term-care homes.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the throne speech did not address the need for establishing a better solution to the issue of orphan drugs. Last session we saw the courageous little Madi Vanstone battling to receive the wonder drug Kalydeco to fight her cystic fibrosis. While the government hid behind the Pan-Canadian Pricing Alliance, Madi's friends and family were forced to privately fund-raise in order for Madi to continue to have

access to Kalydeco. Without Kalydeco, Madi would have spent months in hospital and would have to wait for a double lung transplant.

Instead of focusing on the single cost of some of these drugs, we need to look at the overall cost to the health care system. Putting aside quality-of-life issues, hospitalizations in Madi's case, without Kalydeco, have extraordinary costs associated with them, costs that we simply wouldn't have if she had access to the appropriate drug in the first place.

We've also seen drugs like Avastin and Esbriet that help improve the quality of life for Ontarians. We need to expand access to these drugs, Mr. Speaker, and we need to develop a solution to the cost so that everybody can get the medications they need when and where they need them.

The throne speech also failed to mention the need for more nurses in our health care system. Again, Mr. Wilson mentioned the need for more nurses and the fact they are being cut in many parts of Ontario right now. We know that nurses are the essential part of front-line care and, in fact, they are the backbone of our health care system. As our hospitals are consistently at capacity and as our population ages, we know that nurses are uniquely positioned to lessen the stress in our health care system, particularly in hospitals and long-term-care homes. That is why the current government needs to follow through on its promise to hire more nurses in Ontario. We need to see action, not just empty words. In addition, we need to look at expanding scopes of practice for health care professionals. We've seen early success with allowing pharmacists to administer flu shots, but there's much more that pharmacists can do within our health care system, and the government frankly needs to follow through on the promises it made to them several years ago. We need to make sure that other health care professionals are allowed to expand their scopes of practice to their full scope, so that Ontarians will be able to get the care they need faster and closer to home.

Another issue that is near and dear to me, and which I've spoken about many times, is helping people with disabilities in all aspects of their lives, from treatment to housing, to education, to social, recreational and occupational inclusion. So I was glad to see mention made of persons with disabilities in the throne speech and the commitment to make Ontario fully accessible by 2025. However, we must move faster to ensure that we're able to hit these targets, because people are counting on us.

1510

We know that the current government has promised \$810 million in the current budget to help people with developmental disabilities, but it's unclear, however, what the plan is for spending this money. For that reason, I would urge the government to take a look at the report that has recently been completed by the Select Committee on Developmental Disabilities. It has yet to be tabled in the Legislature, but I anticipate it will be done within the next short while. It contains many recommendations about the ways that we can help people with

developmental disabilities, and I encourage the government to adopt the report once it is tabled so that people across Ontario and their families can get the help, supports and services that they need.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Don't just put it in the DSO.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: And don't just put it in the DSO, as the member from Dufferin—Caledon has stated.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I hope that the government will heed the comments that have been made, and will be made, by the official opposition and, no doubt, by the third party as well and make the necessary changes to make sure that we can have a sustainable system. We need to cut the cost of spending, we need to get the budget under control and we need to get the debt and the deficit under control so that we have a bright future not just now, but for our children and grandchildren. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It is my pleasure and an honour to rise in the 41st Parliament and take my seat, once again, as the member for Nepean—Carleton. It's also a personal thrill to be able to speak to the speech from the throne.

I'd be remiss not only to congratulate Premier Wynne as our newly elected Premier—and first female elected Premier—but also to say thank you to our Lieutenant Governor, David C. Onley, who deliberated on his last throne speech. To him, I say thanks on behalf of the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus.

I'm not going to mince words. It was a humbling election for myself and my colleagues. But I'm reminded each and every day I assume my seat in this House how fortunate I am to carry with me the voices of over 130,000 Nepean—Carleton residents here in this Legislative Assembly. So to them, I want to say thank you, and I want to confirm to them that I'll continue the work of their best interests in this mandate, as I have carried on in the previous three.

Speaker, my riding is one I'm proud of, and I know all 107 members are very proud of their ridings. Mine happens to be a very unique one. It's a microcosm, I believe, of the growing and changing Ontario that the Ontario PC Party in this Legislature must seek to represent. Whether it's urban Ottawa transit, managing explosive suburban growth in Riverside South, Findlay Creek and Barrhaven, or protecting our rural Ontario way of life in North Gower, in Manotick, in Osgoode and Greely, I've learned that Nepean—Carleton's residents are diverse, but they are strong.

The people I represent come from all over the world. Others, like me, came from different parts of Canada, and some have lived for generations on the family farm. What unites the people of Nepean—Carleton, however, is not just their geographic location within the city of Ottawa. I believe it is what their expectations are of government—expectations, I suspect, that are shared by all Ontarians.

They pay their taxes, but they expect health care services for their families and schools to be built for their neighbourhoods. They expect us to keep up with roads and bridges and transit. They expect safe streets and, Speaker, they expect clean air and clean water. They also expect their government to live within its means and protect their hard-earned tax dollars that they send to Toronto, and to protect it wisely.

The Liberal government, on this last score, has failed my constituents. Liberals have been engaged in billion-dollar scandals. They're allowing our deficit to increase. They are continuing to spend without a plan, and that puts our very core and valued public services at risk.

It also makes Ontarians question whether they're getting value for the tax dollars they send to Queen's Park. On that front, it's going to be up to the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus to hold this Liberal government accountable for all Ontarians.

Good government comes from strong opposition. If there's one thing that this Progressive Conservative Party has been good at over the past decade, it has been in opposition. I assure the people at home, Progressive Conservatives and otherwise, that we are going to continue to do the job we have been assigned, and that is to hold this Liberal government accountable.

In seriousness, and I think as some of my colleagues have demonstrated, where we can work with the other parties and where we can make progress by working with others, we will do that. We have seen it before. My colleague from Whitby—Oshawa has done an amazing amount of work on a select committee. We have seen it before with my colleagues Steve Clark and Bob Bailey, who have championed private members' business with other members of this assembly. Where it will work, and where it's in the best interests of Ontarians, the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario will continue to work with the other side. I'm proud to have stood with my colleague from Ottawa Centre, now the government House leader, to work on a suicide prevention plan for our city. So where it works, we are going to do it.

But I assure folks that where the government fails, where they do not advance the interests of the population, we are going to make sure, in the Ontario PC Party, that we point out that there is a better way. That is our job, and we take it seriously. We need a government with policies that do good, not just sound good. It will be the place of the Ontario PC Party to provide that opposition, Speaker.

That brings to mind three specific areas where I would like to point out to the government where they can do better and where we believe, in the Ontario PC Party, that there is a role for us to play—a meaningful role that will make Ontario a better place.

First, my colleagues—both our interim leader and of course my colleague from Whitby—Oshawa—talked about needing to live within our means and balancing our budget. When Moody's and Standard and Poor's lower our credit rating, as expected, that will have an immediate and negative impact on our schools and on our

hospitals. It has been pointed out that servicing the debt and the deficit in Ontario is right now our third-largest spending priority. Every single dollar spent on servicing our debt and deficit is a dollar less for a patient in a hospital and a dollar less for a child in a classroom in this province. It is the third-largest spending priority only behind education and health care. So it will be up to a strong Ontario Progressive Conservative Party to hold this government to account on its ability to pay, its contract negotiations and its use of government assets.

I'm grateful to interim PC leader Jim Wilson for appointing me as critic of the Treasury Board, whose role it will be to rein in government spending and tackle the debt and the deficit. It is a key role, no doubt, in the government, and I am committed, as the Progressive Conservative opposition critic, to ensuring that this government does get it right, not only for my daughter's generation but for my daughter's daughter's generation.

The next few years will show whether or not this Liberal government can break their debt dependence. If they cannot, Ontarians will look for a party that they can trust to deliver the services that we all need and do it within a sustainable budget, supported by an expanded economy. I believe that the Ontario PC Party can do that. I believe in our future and I believe that we will rebuild again.

The Liberal record, however, on the economy has not been strong. Our interim leader has laid out the many reasons why we have had a lacklustre performance in the economy. We have lost, in this province, hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs. We have the highest industrial hydro rates in North America. Our debt is higher than all of the other provinces' combined, Speaker. Our government needs to do better. If they cannot, I'm confident that the Ontario PC Party in four years will be able to rise to that challenge. The best way to protect our core and valued public services is not by digging a deeper hole into debt and deficit and raising people's taxes; it's by getting your spending under control with a stronger private sector economy and a balanced provincial budget. It is that simple. It will require hard work and tough choices, but we know the road ahead.

1520

A second area where the Ontario PC Party can help Ontarians is by keeping a watchful eye on the Liberals' implementation of a new private sector pension. This plan creates the illusion that future benefits can be achieved without current costs. The Liberal plan will give some people benefits decades from now, but it doesn't address the real issues of today.

The new payroll tax that will pay for the plan will cost some people their jobs. We will lose more jobs as a result of the implementation of this plan. And the forced contributions will take money from the pockets of people who are right now struggling to make ends meet. They're struggling with high hydro bills.

I'm a soccer mom. The other parents I know are struggling to balance their own budget. They're seeing

their mortgages increase, higher electricity costs and higher gas prices. The cost of groceries is going up. It's becoming not only more difficult for them to put their kids through soccer and hockey; it's getting more difficult for them to think about saving for their children's education down the road.

It will be the responsibility of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party to criticize these policies. But we have to do it with logic and hard facts. We have to do it for the best interests of all Ontarians. People need to know why it's a bad plan and what we would do to ensure it's better. Again, I'm confident that we in the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party will provide that alternative for all Ontarians and in this House.

This brings me to the third area that needs to be addressed. It's something that I find to be quite personal. I think it's something we have to have an honest and thoughtful conversation about in this Legislative Assembly.

As one of the few MPPs who represents an urban riding with a large rural committee, I have experience working on urban issues, managing explosive suburban growth and standing up for the uniqueness and wholeness of rural Ontario. The Liberals and indeed all of us as an assembly need to address the urban-rural divide in Ontario. It's something I've worked hard on in the past eight years. I think it's something that we have to honestly address in this Assembly.

On election night, the lines were pretty clearly drawn. While much is made that the Ontario PCs dropped mostly from rural Ontario, the reverse is true for the government. They've been almost shut out of rural Ontario. Ontario PCs can play an important role in this dialogue, and the government must also be part of that conversation. Those living in rural Ontario have felt ignored and abandoned by Queen's Park. In my humble estimation, that has to change. Whether it's the cancellation of the Slots at Racetracks Program or the negative impacts of wind turbines that are splitting communities and costing the provincial treasury, it will be up to the government to bridge those divides and ease those concerns. Where rural schools are concerned, it means the government must consider the benefits of keeping a rural school open. Sometimes that school is the lifeblood of the community, and that has to be a major consideration.

As Ontario PCs, we must continue to defend the little guys and bring their voices to Queen's Park, but we also have a challenge. We have to learn to speak to people in urban Ottawa, in Toronto, in Kitchener and in London. I'm confident we can do that. I'm confident we can help forge a better understanding. We can urge a common ground. But in this area, I firmly believe the government needs the opposition as much as the opposition needs the government, because if we are truly to speak for one Ontario, we have to begin to understand one another. If they have the foresight and they are prepared to admit mistakes have been made, the government will work with us to right the wrongs felt in rural Ontario, starting with changes to the Green Energy Act and fixes to the horse

racing industry. To achieve these results in these areas, it means we must be an opposition that engages all Ontarians, not just one that speaks to itself. But that said, it must be true as well for the government—to speak and engage with all Ontarians and not just the ones whom they are most comfortable with. That is the provincial government's core job. It is their core responsibility. We as Progressive Conservatives will be here to remind them of that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much, Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to the throne speech debate today. I'm going to pick up on some of the comments of my colleagues—my leader, Mr. Wilson; the member from Whitby—Oshawa, Ms. Elliott; and, from Nepean—Carleton, Ms. MacLeod.

First of all, I do want to speak to my people at home and to thank them most sincerely for the trust that they have placed in me once again, in sending me to Queen's Park for a fourth term. I'm honoured and humbled, and I will continue to serve them in the best way that I possibly can. It's the only promise I made to them when I was running for election in 2003: that I would serve to the best of my abilities. I continue to hold myself to that promise, and I know they continue to hold me to that promise as well. Nevertheless, I'm continually honoured and humbled by their support. I have a chance to meet with them so often, to share their lives, to involve myself in their issues and them in mine. It's a relationship that I think has grown over the years. It's a special bond that I think we all develop, as members of this Legislature, with the people we represent. It is something that, when the day comes that I'm no longer here, I'm going to cherish in the most significant and sincere way. So thank to you to those folks from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke for their trust and confidence once again.

I want to pick up a little bit on my colleague from Nepean—Carleton. She finished by talking about that rural-urban divide. I know that, earlier this year, the Premier spoke in an area in southwestern Ontario and said that there is no urban-rural divide. Or maybe she meant rural-urban divide. But either way, she would be wrong. I think this election clarified that. More and more, we're seeing a division in this province based on partisan lines. That's not a good thing. It is clear and it is defined by the map, but it is not a good thing. I've heard from so many of my constituents, saying to me, "John, I hope that the government, now that they've got their majority back, is not going to ignore us here in rural Ontario." I'll take them at their word, because I've had many discussions with many members of the cabinet on the other side for the last 11 years. I've always believed that they have listened to what we've had to say. But there is a feeling out there, folks, ladies and gentlemen of the cabinet of the newly elected, first-ever female elected Premier of the province of Ontario—there is a feeling out there that maybe you don't care as much as you should about the

people in rural Ontario. That's a message that we keep hearing and I think it's one that you need to listen to.

My friend from Peterborough said earlier, in answering a question today, that the most important thing is to listen. Well, I want the folks over there to listen what's being said across this province, not to become complacent and to think that the results of the 2014 election were somehow a vindication or an expression of satisfaction in your government.

We all know that this was a difficult election for us. My colleagues from Nepean—Carleton articulated that. We made some mistakes in the campaign; we understand that. But I don't think it should be viewed by you people over there that it was a complete—

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Embrace.

Mr. John Yakabuski:—embrace—thank you very much to my colleague from Etobicoke—that it was an embracing of your policies. It was not. Politics and elections take on their own life, and this one was no different than others. So I want you to be humble over there and understand that you have the power, but with that power comes a great deal of responsibility, and it is important that everyone across this province feels that they are being treated fairly by this government.

My colleagues talked about a number of different things. I want to talk about, firstly, as Mr. Wilson talked about: We've got to stop with this misnomer that you guys keep putting out there, that Ontario has the lowest per capita costs in the country. It is just that: a misnomer. It is misleading, at the very least.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I have to ask the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke to withdraw that unparliamentary comment.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Withdraw. Apparently, it's not. I certainly find it confusing.

You see, I come from a family of 14 children, and we had lower per capita costs in that house than a lot of the other homes down the street. But we never wanted for anything. We were never poor. We never wanted for anything. But our per capita costs were damn well in line. 1530

So if you think you're really fooling anybody, I put a challenge out to the folks in the media gallery too, to stop letting them getting away with that silliness. Because you have lower per capita costs than Prince Edward Island? Please, please. You can do better than that. You can do better than that to try to defend the mess you've been making with the finances of Ontario. Look at the real numbers. As my friend from Nepean—Carleton said, you've got the highest deficit of all provinces. In fact, the deficit of Ontario is higher than the deficit of all provinces combined. The debt in Ontario is higher than that of any other province. In fact, it is higher than the debt of all other provinces combined. Those are the real numbers you need to be thinking of, not going around telling some fairy tale about having lower per capita cost.

You should actually be looking at the real numbers: \$289 billion in debt. That's what you get when you implement this budget, which I'm sure you're going to

do after you introduce it on the 14th. We have no power to stop it. We will not support that budget. We can't support a budget that spends that kind of money without any plan to get us out of debt. My friend from Whitby—Oshawa talked about how you have all kinds of words to talk about how you're going to manage your way out of the fiscal mess, but not one single word about a concrete plan to actually get it done. Words in the throne speech—my gosh. I would call this the dichotomous throne speech.

"Dichotomous" is not a prehistoric dinosaur or something; it's just when you've got two conflicting visions that are not parallel at all. They just make no sense. So on one hand, you've got the government talking about how they're—as His Honour said in the throne speech, "The government is unwavering in its resolve to balance the budget in three years"—unwavering—and in the next breath, they're talking about how, however, no services will be cut. "We're not going to jeopardize the progress we've made in Ontario." So on the one hand, they're unwavering; on the other hand, it says, "Belly up to the trough, folks. We'll say no to no one, if it's a special interest group that we're going to need somewhere down the road." You see, you've got this inner conflict over there. You must feel like you're in an eternal tug-of-war within your own beings. The Premier must lie awake, wondering which side of the bed she should turn to, because she's being tossed and turned by her own words: "Kill the deficit, spend more money and reduce the debt. Bring in some more socially activist programs—I love them." She must be just fighting with herself on a moment-by-moment basis.

But my friend Mr. Wilson said—and, boy, sometimes you've got to put these things into perspective, Speaker. It's scary: For seven years the unemployment in Ontario has been higher than the national average—seven years. Speaker, in the Bible, the Bible that I read—not enough, I'm told by others—they talk of seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine, and to take those seven years of plenty and prepare. Those who did not prepare, they suffered during the seven years of famine. But we now have a crisis of seven years. It is of Biblical proportions. This government is dealing with a situation that they've created; it is now of Biblical proportions. Seven years of unemployment higher than the national average, and what do they do about it? Well, Charles Sousa would say, "No one's freaking about it." Well, I'll tell you, those people who don't have a job, they are freaking. They are freaking plenty.

Mr. Robert Bailey: The bankers are, too.

Mr. John Yakabuski: And the bankers are.

So now they talk about, "What are we going to do? Well, we have the answer, Speaker. We're going to bring in another pension plan." Oh, yes, because, you see, all of those people out there who haven't asked the questions—and this was great during the campaign. Some people were going around saying, "Well, but the Liberals are going to give me another pension. If the Liberals get in there, I'm going to get another pension." "Oh, my

goodness gracious," I said. "You don't know the half of it; in fact, you don't know the quarter of it." It is just another fairy tale, but I keep telling the people out there, there is no fairy godmother and there is no tooth fairy, because the Liberals kept telling them there was.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: They didn't actually say it.

Years ago, the federal government, in their wisdom, decided—and all parties agreed—that it was very questionable whether people were saving enough for retirement, so they brought in the RRSPs. They said, "You have an opportunity, in a tax-sheltered way, to prepare for those retirement years, in addition to any government pensions you may be eligible for"—plus some people would have their own pensions through their employment. So they gave them the opportunity.

We're in such a crisis now, with the price of hydro and everything else, that I've got families saying, "You're telling me I need to put money away? How can I put money away when the wolf is at the door? I can't put any money away. I can't pay the bills as they are. My kids need new shoes. Have you seen the price of shoes? I can't afford them, because I've got to pay the hydro bill, but I can't afford to pay it. And you're telling me, Mr. Yakabuski, that I need to put money away for retirement? I don't have any money to put away for retirement."

They can't put any money into an RRSP. They have no money to put away, but now the Premier is going to tell them that, at the source, you're going to be deducted 1.9% of your income. So those shoes you couldn't afford just got less affordable, that hydro bill you can't pay is just going to be more on an overdue basis, because we're going to be taking 1.9%.

By the way, your employer—he or she or it; the corporation, or whatever—is going to have to pay 1.9% of your earnings, as well.

When I talked to people in my riding—I talked to businesspeople—they said, "John, I am going to have to lay off people. I'm not going to have a choice. I can't afford this." If you're running a grocery store today—you've got so many coolers today in a grocery store—their hydro bills are just out of this world. They have to have a lot of employees, and now you're telling them they've got to bring in a pension plan.

One of the key differences about the RRSP: If you put a dollar in that plan, it's yours, and when it—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes, but you can watch it go down.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, sure, you have some risk. Like everything else, you have some risk. Gilles, you've got risk when you get out of bed in the morning. Come on; everybody does. You've got some risk with your investment, but every investment has risk. But at the end of the day, whatever that is worth whenever you retire is yours. That is yours.

With this plan here, those people are going to be paying 1.9%. So if they get a deduction off the cheque and they live till 64, don't collect a penny—they're not married. So when they go, there's nothing. That plan

goes back into the big pool for everybody else. It's like a life insurance policy. They're hoping that some people will kick the bucket before they ever collect, because it's going to put more in there for someone else. But you can bequeath that RRSP to anyone you want. It could be a son or a daughter. It could be a friend, if you're not married, or whatever. It could be a niece or a nephew. Hell, it could be me. Don't sign them all over too fast.

So you have all of those options. But this government pension plan? No option whatsoever. There are a whole lot of questions that need to be answered about this plan.

Let's say they bring in this plan, but it isn't a plan that is brought in by the federal government. So you have a plan in Ontario, but you don't have a plan in another province. You've been working in Ontario, and all of a sudden you have to go somewhere else to work—like that's not a true story? Come on. It's happening every day. Gordon Lightfoot had a song, *Alberta Bound*. It should be re-released; it'd be a million-seller.

So people are going elsewhere. You move to another province, and they don't have a provincial pension plan. Do you get to carry those credits to that other province, or do you have to come back to Ontario someday to die?

There are a whole lot of unanswered questions. It's a big dream that they threw out there with the tooth fairy, and they're hoping that a lot of people voted for them—a lot of people did vote for them on the basis of that, because they thought it was something for nothing.

Ladies and gentlemen, we all know that there is nothing for nothing in this world, and that pension plan is no exception.

Interjection: Nothing for free, Yak.

1540

Mr. John Yakabuski: That's right.

So let's get back to the—

Interjection: Only love.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, love is—I'm not even going to go there, but thanks for the admonishment.

We got the credit warning from Moody's. It's not a downgrade yet. It's not a downgrade yet. I'll repeat that one more time: It's not a downgrade—yet. But it is a warning. They've taken Ontario from a stable to a negative.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Shot across the bow.

Mr. John Yakabuski: That is a shot across the bow, as my colleague from Sarnia says. He is so absolutely right. It is a shot across the bow; it is a warning to the people across the aisle that you cannot go on behaving the way you are. You cannot go on thinking that you can have your cake and eat it too. Either you are interested in dealing with the debt and deficit of Ontario, or you're not. But you can't have a story one day and a different story the next day. I realize how that keeps people off balance, and people are never really sure where you're going.

But that is not very good for the financial community when it comes to looking at Ontario's situation and wondering, "Is this a good place to invest?" One of the first things they're going to look at is, "What is the fiscal

plan? How do we get to balance here in the province of Ontario?"

They're saying that in three years, 2017-18, we're going to be balanced. You can't get there without a plan. It's not just going to happen. All of a sudden, the magic wand is going to be waved, and we're going to balance the books here in Ontario? That's impossible. They must think that, but it doesn't work that way.

The Premier keeps saying, "Yes, there will be tough decisions." She loves words; she just loves these little phrases: "difficult decisions" or "tough decisions." She loves to say those things, but she never wants to do a thing that actually demonstrates that she's putting a plan into action. Sooner or later, the words are just going to run dry because the numbers are going to go up.

If next year's deficit goes up, the major credit rating agencies are just going to dump on Ontario like a big Mack truck unloading its whole load, a big tandem truck, a tri-axle dumping of the worst possible manure on to Ontario. We're just going to be a pariah when it comes to managing our financial situation.

The credit warning is not something that you people can overlook. Where is there one substantial statement from the Premier that is not just kind of a—everything they say is so ambiguous. Where is the one clear statement that said, "This is a specific action that we're going to take to reduce the deficit. We're going to attack the deficit"—not, all of a sudden, it's going to disappear like some magical David Copperfield act in 2017-18 but—"today we're going to actually do something of significance to reduce the deficit"? There's no such thing in this throne speech. There's no such thing in the budget that was brought in on May 1. And we're told we're getting the same thing tied up with a different ribbon on the 14th of July.

If there's no specific concrete action that says, "This is what we're going to do," then you watch out. That warning from Moody's or Standard and Poor's—whoever—is more likely to be an action of a downgrade. As my colleague Mr. Wilson, our leader, was saying earlier, with a downgrade comes a price. I think you were quoting Jack Mintz earlier today. If we get a downgrade, and that adds even a point—a point—to the interest that Ontario has to pay to service its debt—by the way, folks, the servicing of Ontario's debt is the third-largest line item in the budget. After health care spending and education spending, the next-biggest line isn't some ministry. It isn't some infrastructure program. It isn't some tangible service that we're providing for the people of Ontario. No. It's servicing the debt; it's the interest that we pay on our debt. If the third-largest item in your house was the interest you paid on debt, I'm going to bet that you're going to do something to reduce that debt. You're going to have a concrete plan. You're going to sit down with your family or, if it requires it, your financial planner, but you're going to sit down together and you're going to say, "This can't go on. We have to do something about our debt."

What do they do over there? It's all la-di-da. "We want to make sure that everybody is happy." Over there, the Premier says, "We've got something for everybody. Everybody in Ontario has to be able to aspire to be great." Of course they have to aspire to be great, but we can't do it with money we don't have. There has to be some realism. You can't just spend, spend, spend until there's nothing left and you have handcuffed future generations.

If you don't owe it to the people of Ontario today, you owe it to the people of Ontario of tomorrow, those who have just been born, like my latest granddaughter, Adelaide.

Applause.

Mr. John Yakabuski: She was born before; she's not that new. I'll show you a picture later. But to that generation, to her parents, Emily and Tom, two young people struggling to get by, like all other young people, but also to future generations, how can you let them start out—Adelaide started out on November 16, 2013, over \$20,000 in debt. Shame on you people. You have to do better.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Ms. Jones assumes ballot item number 29 and Mr. Yurek assumes ballot item number 5.

Further debate? The leader of the third party.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'll likely be sharing my time with some of my caucus colleagues. I do want to start, however, by saying that it is a pleasure to rise and respond to the speech from the throne. It's good to be back in this Legislature and doing the work that is an important job that Ontarians sent us here to do. They have given the New Democrats very important work, and we are looking forward to accomplishing that work on their behalf.

I also, of course, would like to thank the people of Hamilton Centre, as well as the people around this province who have sent us here to do this work.

Ontarians know very well what New Democrats stand for. They know that New Democrats stand up for families, and they know that we constantly defend quality public services that families rely upon: services like health care, particularly making sure that the home care that people need is there for them; making sure that their hospitals are not so full of patients that wait times in ERs are continuing to climb; making sure that, for example, the kind of services that are needed in southern Ontario are also available in northern Ontario; making sure that we have a health care system that is responding to crises that, frankly, have continued to grow—for example, the crisis in mental health. That's what New Democrats stand up for: a health care system that actually meets the needs of the people of this province.

Education: an education system that is there for families and children; an education system that is not thrown into chaos by the political whims of a governing party

that's looking for more power; an education system that all children can benefit from and can reach their potential by being educated within; an education system that, after the primary and high school grades, then allows young people to get post-secondary training in a way that's convenient and affordable and accessible to them. That's what New Democrats stand up for: a child care system that's available to our youngest of children and their families, one that has been eroded over the last number of years. But New Democrats are the ones that have been sounding that alarm bell and pushing, even today in question period, to make sure that that child care system is shored up instead of allowed to continue to erode by the Liberals.

1550

These are the kinds of things, these are the kinds of public services that New Democrats stand up for, day in and day out. Ontarians know that New Democrats fight very hard for them to make sure that their lives are more affordable. We've watched year over year as Ontarians have been telling us they simply cannot make ends meet anymore. So it's New Democrats that have fought to avoid the pinch of the HST on Ontarians when the Liberals decided to bring it in, that are concerned about and trying to find solutions to our fast-growing electricity rates in this province and our auto insurance rates that are completely out of control. These are the kind of fights that New Democrats have taken on, on behalf of Ontarians, to make sure that someone is thinking about the difficult struggles many families face in trying to make ends meet at the end of the month.

Jobs: It's New Democrats that, day in and day out, come to this chamber and remind the Liberals that there are 300,000 manufacturing jobs that have been lost in this province and that many, many of those families have had a serious reduction in their quality of life because the jobs that they had to go to, for those that were lucky enough to get jobs, were ones that paid far, far less and certainly didn't provide the kind of security that comes with a good job—things like pensions and health insurance plans. Those are the things that New Democrats stand up for and fight for in this Legislature: good jobs for people from one end of this province to the other.

Ontarians know that New Democrats work hard to find ways to ensure that the government is held accountable and is responsive and responsible to the people of this province. What does that look like? In the last number of years, New Democrats have brought a number of measures forward, some of which have actually been, at least legislatively, put through this House. We haven't seen the result yet, but things like the Financial Accountability Office. That office still sits dark, but it's an office that will help to ensure that there is transparency and accountability with the public dollars the people send to Queen's Park to ensure that their services are being provided.

But that's not the end of it, Speaker. New Democrats have also been at the forefront of putting pressure on this government to ensure that there is better hospital over-

sight, making sure that there is an Ombudsman that can look at what's happening in our hospital system, long-term care and home care. These are struggles that New Democrats have brought here on behalf of Ontarians because Ontarians know that frankly there is a great deal of investment in the health services that are provided to people in Ontario. But those investments are not always watched over appropriately by a third-party, unbiased body. That's why Ombudsman oversight in the health care system is something that we have fought for some time to have implemented.

It's the same with children's aid societies and the same with the MUSH sector. It's not just about spending money; it's about making sure that the money that we're investing is actually getting the results that Ontarians deserve. When we see what happened with things like Ornge air ambulance, eHealth and all of these kinds of troubles that Ontarians have watched their government get into, it proves even more that these measures of accountability and these measures of transparency are absolutely required here in Ontario. And now that we're in a majority government situation, I would put that in fact the need for these measures is greater than ever before.

But that, Speaker, is the record of New Democrats, and it's a record that we will be proud to continue with. That's why more than a million Ontarians asked New Democrats to come back to this Legislature to hold the Liberals to account. I can tell you, Speaker, that is exactly what New Democrats intend on doing.

But you know, Ontarians also know that this Liberal government has a record. Yes, they've spent several months talking about being "progressive," but the Liberal record is pretty clear. Over a decade, the Liberal government has not been accountable and it has not been progressive. Unemployment has remained above the national average since January 2006. It's not progressive to have a huge unemployment rate, where we have all kinds of people in precarious work situations, where they are being hired by temp agencies that this government has allowed to expand enormously in this province. They've done nothing—nothing—to deal with these temp agencies that are, quite frankly, ripping people off to no end.

They've done nothing to make sure that good jobs stay here in Ontario. It's not progressive to watch as good jobs leave, then see all kinds of part-time jobs and service sector jobs that are low-paid come to Ontario, and then pretend somehow that there's a great record over there for job creation when the facts are simply much, much more clear than that. The facts show clearly that good jobs have left this province, to be replaced by low-paid service sector jobs. That is not progressive.

We've seen hydro bills that have increased 300% since the Liberals took office, and those hydro bills are projected to increase yet another 42% over the next number of years—the next five years or so. There's nothing progressive about sitting idly by while people tell you over and over again that they can't afford the bills,

and all you continue to do is make it harder and harder for people to afford their bills.

I don't know how many people I've spoken to over the last number of years, whether they're small businesses, whether they are individuals, whether they're large families or small, whether they're in northern Ontario or southern Ontario or southwestern Ontario, who have said that they simply cannot afford to pay their hydro bills anymore. A woman from Sudbury told me that she's paying \$20,000 a year now for her electricity bill—\$20,000 a year—and now that is going to increase by 42%, because the Liberals think it's progressive to force people to pay hydro rates that they simply can no longer afford. It's not progressive to do that. It's not progressive to ignore that people are becoming less and less able to pay their rent, less and less able to keep a roof over their heads because they simply can't afford the bills at the end of the month.

You know, it's interesting. New Democrats have always fought to make sure that people are able to afford a decent living. Whether it's on affordable housing, whether it's on social assistance rates, whether it's on the fact that basic necessities like hydro are becoming out of reach, these are the fights that New Democrats have fought. In fact, the founder of the New Democratic Party fought a fight on affordability. It was the affordability of health care. But that is the tradition of New Democrats, and we will continue to fight on behalf of people when it comes to these issues.

But you know, Speaker, it is very, very clear that over the last couple of weeks, when the discussion was ongoing during the election campaign, Ontarians clearly did not want to see austerity here in the province of Ontario. They voted against austerity, they voted against job losses and they voted against cuts to front-line services. New Democrats have a duty to every single person in this province to hold this government to account.

1600

The throne speech that was read on Thursday is really the prelude to what we're calling a Trojan Horse budget. It's a Trojan Horse budget, Speaker, because the Liberals have been bending over backwards to convince everybody that it is "progressive," but you merely need to scratch the surface of that budget to find out that there are some dangerous surprises in store for Ontario.

We know for sure that that budget will likely be selling off Ontario's assets. Who knows exactly what that might look like? The government is, of course, not being upfront and clear about exactly what that looks like, but valuable public assets are on the seller's block by the Liberal government.

I've been elected since 2004. There are members in this caucus who have been elected since before that, and some are newly elected. I think pretty much every couple of years a budget comes along where there's going to be a massive sell-off of assets. Even Mike Harris wasn't able to do it, Speaker. And that's a good thing.

But I don't know why the Liberals think that selling off public assets is a progressive move. Speaker, it is not a progressive move. In fact, it's everything but progressive. Those assets belong to the people of Ontario. Those assets should be delivering for the people of Ontario long into the future. Those assets should be delivering for my son and for his children and for their children. That's why they're assets, Speaker, and that's why the people of Ontario vote against, don't like, reject, the idea of selling off the furniture to heat the house: because it doesn't make any sense whatsoever. In that Trojan Horse budget, we see a massive sell-off of valuable public assets.

We also see that the Liberals are primed to open up new corporate tax loopholes next year. We have said time and time again that that doesn't make any sense, but it's more than that, Speaker. It's that it's not progressive. It's not progressive to give the very wealthiest corporations among us even more tax breaks while you're cutting public services or while you're implementing an austerity budget. We're talking billions of dollars, Speaker—billions of dollars—starting next year that are going to be given away in corporate tax loopholes. That's not progressive. Not in the very least is it progressive.

But yet again, instead of the Liberals fighting the good fight on these corporate tax loopholes, fighting the good fight with Stephen Harper in Ottawa over these corporate tax loopholes, they're happy to just quietly sign them away, making sure that the big corporations can write off their HST on things like entertainment and on things like luxury cars, while the rest of us have to worry about what those 100,000 job cuts might look like—because that's another thing that's in this budget. Another thing that's in this budget is a huge gap when it comes to how the government is going to ensure that its promise to balance the books is kept.

When I asked those questions today in question period, I didn't get an answer from the Premier. I didn't get clarification. Don Drummond, the person who the Liberals hired to review all of the services here in Ontario and give them ideas about how to do things differently, said publicly that his firm belief is that that 100,000-job cut that Mr. Hudak used to talk about during the campaign is actually buried in the Liberal budget; that he sees very clearly that those 100,000 jobs are, in fact, going to be cut by the Liberals. I asked the Premier straight up in question period to be clear about it, to come clean with the public. She chose not to. So that tells us clearly that there is something up the sleeve of this government. It actually reinforces our suspicion about this Trojan Horse budget, that in fact it does have serious, serious ramifications for the people of this province.

I also asked, Mr. Speaker, about the asset sales, and I wasn't able to get a good response in that regard either. It's disappointing, because people expect their government to be upfront with them about what their intentions are in the coming years.

It's interesting: Another thing that the Liberals brought forward in this budget is something called PRPP

pensions. I don't know whether we'll see that in the budget that gets tabled on Monday, but I know it was in the budget that was tabled in May. It's one of the reasons the New Democrats couldn't support that budget either. PRPPs are Stephen Harper-style pension plans, plain and simple. They're are Stephen Harper-style pension plans and they are favoured by banks and insurance companies because they're basically pooled retirement pension plans, kind of like a pooled RSP scheme. The big thing about that pooled RSP scheme, though, is that the banks and insurance companies make a heck of a lot of money on administrative fees. So yes, you can put away your retirement money into one of these pension vehicles, but a lot of that retirement money isn't going to go to you when you retire; it's going to have been absorbed by the banks or the insurance companies that offer you that vehicle.

PRPPs are not a pension plan; they're a way for the insurance companies and the banks to get more out of the pockets of hard-working Ontarians and Canadians. I think it is shameful that the Liberals have brought this forward—in fact, in the budget that we saw back in May, have accelerated—as their primary option, their primary commitment when it comes to retirement security. A public pension plan—well, they kicked that out to 2017, maybe. But this year, 2014, right away, right now, the Liberals are going to make sure that the banks and insurance companies get their cut of Ontarians' retirement money. That is not progressive; PRPPs are not progressive. But of course the Liberals will go ahead with that, because that's in fact what they believe. They believe that the banks and insurance companies should do better. They believe that the big corporations should do better, and that everyday families should have to pay the price. New Democrats disagree with that. We think that is absolutely the wrong way to go. There are interesting things that weren't addressed by the Liberals in their throne speech. Of course, they didn't mention the PRPPs in the throne speech, but they were in the budget that was tabled before, so we're interested to see if they show up again. I suspect that they will.

The Liberals didn't address at all, in their throne speech, the rising electricity rates in this province. I mentioned at the beginning of my speech the numbers of people I've spoken to who are absolutely beside themselves with the cost of electricity in this province. The government, the Liberals, have not made a single commitment around trying to stem those increases. In fact, what they're looking to do is sell off things like OPG, and perhaps sell off Hydro One, to one of their friends, which is Bruce Power. These are things that are quite disturbing, things that I hear are perhaps in the wings. We know that these kinds of sell-offs don't do well for Ontarians. We know that that simply reduces accountability and transparency and increases the cost, increases the price that Ontarians pay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The 407.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: We've seen that with the 407, for example; thank you, Mr. Bisson. The member from

Timmins—James Bay is reminding us of one of the colossal failures of privatization, and that was the 407. But we see more of that. In fact, one of the things that I neglected to talk about that we did see in that budget and that we will expect in the throne speech is more and more privatization, Speaker. More and more privatization is headed our way. That is not progressive. That's not a progressive way to go, and yet, somehow the Liberals continue to think that they can label that Trojan Horse budget as progressive.

1610

Sell-offs in the hydro sector are not going to help us with our hydro rates, and there is nothing in that throne speech to suggest that the government even gets it, that people are struggling to make ends meet, or that people can't pay their bills, and that one of their biggest bills is their electricity bill. Somehow, I guess that's something that Liberals are not concerned about at all, but I can tell you that Ontarians are, so New Democrats will work hard to make sure that there is some accountability around what the government does in terms of the electricity system, as well as the rates for households and businesses.

Auto insurance—not a word on auto insurance in that throne speech, Speaker, but let's hope that Ontarians who have been burdened with the highest auto insurance rates, regardless of the fact that we have the lowest accident rates in this province, are able to get some relief. We know that the Liberals have dragged their feet thus far. We know that they've given the insurance industry massive breaks in terms of policy changes that have allowed them to significantly reduce their claim payouts—close to \$2 billion on an annual basis over the last couple of years.

None of those savings in payouts went to the rate-payers or went to the insurance payers, the people that pay their auto insurance. None of that money went to them. Now the government's talking about, perhaps, anti-fraud measures, that perhaps those things might contribute to reductions in auto insurance bills. One of the things I think we've noticed is that this government isn't all that good with making sure that commitments to everyday people are kept up with. Commitments to big companies absolutely are, but to everyday people? Definitely not.

Another thing that was missing from the throne speech: a consumer bill of rights—once again, something for people. Who knows whether or not we will ever see the light of day of a consumer bill of rights?

The government talked during the campaign about a fee cap or cut, or some kind of way of reining in hospital parking fees. That wasn't mentioned in the throne speech.

As I mentioned earlier, the Financial Accountability Officer was absent from the throne speech, although the legislation has passed this House.

Child care has been suffering enormously. It's an issue I raised again in question period today. Some 18 communities right now are facing the closure of their

child care centres. Today I talked about Sarnia's Coronation Park Day Nursery. That's one of the 18 communities that are seeing child care centres about to close, but you know, it's only one example. There are 17 other communities where this is happening. The Premier got up and said that there have been no cuts to child care. I quickly got an email sent to me when I got back to my office after question period today, from someone who represents people in the child care sector, who said that the Ministry of Education cut child care by 10% in 2013.

Well, the Premier says there have been no cuts to child care. Child care centres are closing around the province. Oh, and then, lo and behold, a 10% reduction last year to child care. It's not progressive to pull child care centres out of communities, to leave families high and dry and families with no child care. That's definitely not a progressive thing.

They didn't talk at all about the horse racing industry in their throne speech. We know that horse racing has been devastated. We know that that devastation has rippled through rural Ontario. We know that many, many communities have seen significant job losses because of what this government did in implementing a hasty plan that was drawn up on the back of a napkin, because one of their friends in high places thought that they could make a lot of money by bringing big American casinos into Ontario. All because of that dream of the big American casino, they devastated an entire industry in rural Ontario—shameful. There's nary a word of it in the throne speech, Speaker—not even one word.

They didn't talk about health care wait times for emergencies and for surgeries which I've talked about already. I'm pretty sure that their platform talked about bringing down some of these wait times in key areas, but nothing was said about that in the throne speech. Of course, today in question period, New Democrats were holding the government to account on the wait times in the emergency rooms in London.

The Liberals promised more health links programs—not mentioned; memory clinics for people suffering from Alzheimer's and dementia—not mentioned; dental programs for kids from low-income households—I think this is a promise that has been recycled 1,000 times—not mentioned; ranked ballot choice for municipal elections, something that was a huge issue leading up to the campaign—not mentioned; nuclear refurbishments—who knows? Who knows whether we'll ever actually see a business plan for some of those activities that the Liberals intend to undertake?

Part of the problem, Speaker, is that the promises flow like honey from the Liberals, but the achievements simply don't reflect the promises. Whether it's in health care, whether it's in anti-poverty, whether it's in jobs or whether it's just basically meeting the fundamentals that Ontarians expect the government to deliver, the Liberals don't deliver.

So we New Democrats are here to do everything we can over the next couple of years to fight for the people of this province and to try to force their government to

actually make good on the multiple promises that they make during election campaigns. We're going to continue to do that work, Speaker. We're proud to have that important role, and we are going to take that role seriously because the people of this province do deserve a progressive government. They do deserve a government that makes sure that their lives are better. They do deserve a government that's more focused on the needs of everyday people than on the biggest corporations, the banks and the insurance companies. They don't have that government right now, but we are going to work really hard to make sure that the people of this province can get some results that make a positive difference in their everyday lives because as I said at the beginning, that's what New Democrats do.

People know what we stand up for, people know what we fight for, and people know that we'll be doing that work over the next couple of years. We do have an important job to do, and we will hold this government to account. When we disagree with the Premier's decisions, when we disagree with the direction of this government, we will stand up, day in and day out, and put the interests of families and Ontarians first. We will be speaking out against the Liberals' Trojan Horse budget. We will be holding this government to account for the decisions that it makes because it is New Democrats who will be the progressive voices in this House and across the province, as we always have been, notwithstanding the small moments of time when the Liberals try that little jacket on and then discard it after they form a majority government. Speaker, that's who New Democrats are, that's who we always have been, and that's who we will continue to be. We look forward to that work.

I am going to be concluding my remarks very briefly, and sharing the rest of the time with Catherine Fife, the MPP for Kitchener–Waterloo.

I'm proud of the work that New Democrats have been able to provide for the people of this province over the years. I look forward to the work that they've given us to do in the next couple of years. I know for sure that, day in and day out, we'll be in this House standing up for things that are important to the people of this province, like their health care system, their education system, good jobs and ensuring that life is made affordable for families and businesses.

1620

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's my pleasure to stand up to make some comments about the throne speech. My copy is fairly marked up. I've renamed this Building Expectations Up in Ontario. This remains our concern about this document: that you don't build a province up by letting the most vulnerable fall behind. This is a concern going forward with some of the promises in this piece of legislation and some of the promises that have been made during the election period as well.

The people of this province gave New Democrats the job, during the 41st Parliament of Ontario, of holding this

government to account. It's going to be a challenging job, and we're very honest about that, and we're very straightforward about it. There's no end to that responsibility, as we've seen already. I'm proud to have been re-elected by the people of Kitchener–Waterloo, to be sent back to Queen's Park and remind this government of their responsibilities and their commitments. I'm proud to stand with the people of the NDP caucus. We are a diverse group, and we're a strong group, and we have a great leader. We are going to hold this government to account and put the people's priorities first in this House going forward.

During the recently completed election campaign, the Liberal government made promise after promise after promise, and for their litany of promises they were re-elected.

I think it needs to be said that fear can be a very powerful emotion.

During this throne speech and at nearly every opportunity since then, when a Liberal has found themselves in front of a microphone, they have talked about building Ontario up. In reality, the people of this province have heard a party that is building expectations up. That is what people hear, because there is a track record that this government has to take ownership of. Part of our role in this House is to remind you of that track record so that going forward, people come first.

If this government's recent history is a predictor of the future, we'll see those expectations let down. New Democrats are here to make sure that when the Liberals don't follow through on their promises, the voices of Ontarians—to whom the Liberals made those promises—aren't left out while they're let down.

This budget was a surprising budget. I agree entirely with our leader: It is not a progressive budget. We still have outstanding concerns with it, as we did two months ago. It wasn't more than two months ago that there was no end to the list of people who were lining up to call the Liberal budget progressive, but very soon—if it hasn't already happened—it will only be Liberals who are calling this budget progressive. As our leader has said, you don't have to look at the Premier's budget for very long to realize that it is not a progressive budget.

Even Bloomberg News reported that after year one of the Wynne budget, the Liberals' own documents show the deepest freeze in two decades. They continued by adding, "A 2017 Liberal government would drop spending by the most per person since former Premier Mike Harris won election on deficit elimination in 1995."

If you look at the hospital operating budgets that have been frozen—third straight year of frozen budgets for hospitals, amounting to cuts to hospital services. When you freeze those budgets, those are cuts. The Ontario Nurses' Association has criticized this decision, stating that they remain deeply concerned by the continuing flatlining of funding of Ontario hospitals. Years of hospital underfunding have cut millions of hours of registered nurses' care, increasing the number of high-risk patient care situations.

This is the track record, so this is why we remained so concerned when the budget was presented in May. This government clearly has a revenue problem. I hope that we can all agree with that. The Liberals made promise after promise, and almost immediately after the election they were warned about the effect their plan will have on this province.

We know that Ontario's credit rating was downgraded in 2012 by Moody's. Now two out of the four major rating firms have Ontario at the bottom rung of the AA range. Standard and Poor's, which is an ironic name, is leaning toward a downgrade with a negative outlook on its rating. Moody's is leaning toward another downgrade with a negative outlook, announced last week.

I want to say why this is so important and why we care about that. Moody's stated that if the government fails to provide clear signals of its ability and willingness to implement the required measures to redress the current fiscal pressures going forward, the credit rating will go down. The Minister of Finance went out into the public at that time and said, "Banks are not freaking out. Don't worry; they're not freaking out. Corporations are not freaking out." But corporations are sitting on billions of dollars and banks, quite honestly, benefit, because they make more money out of the deal.

But this is why it's important: As government misses deficit targets, which is happening right now—the Liberal government prior to 2012-13 was on record to reduce their deficit. That is no longer happening. They were making progress; now they are not. When governments start piling on new debt, lenders will charge them more to borrow. This means governments have less money to spend on the priorities, the priorities that they have said are so important, like education, like health care, like infrastructure. We just heard this morning that in the northern part of this province, infrastructure has been neglected for so many years that you are seeing the effects of that neglect on a daily basis.

But in spite of all of this, which is quite something, the government continues to ignore the possibility of rolling back their corporate tax cuts. This is something that we should be able to work together on. Ontario is one of the lowest-taxed jurisdictions in North America. With the combination of the warnings we are receiving from credit rating agencies and a government that has made many, many election promises, we need to look seriously at eliminating those corporate tax rollbacks. You need the revenue. We are in one of the lowest corporate tax jurisdictions in the country. You will not be able to meet your deficit reduction projections; you just will not. You do not have the money to do it—or, you're going to break promises.

We would contend that the government is quite honestly living in a fantasy world where there are no consequences for their decisions. Actually, I recently read an article in the National Post by Scott Stinson. This is on the pension, because this is quite interesting. It's that now the Liberals, because they're in a majority setting—it's a bit of an adjustment for all of us, because I

was really enjoying the minority part of it. But Scott Stinson says this about what Liberals can say:

"Thus, the line in the throne speech about how the proposed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan 'guarantees financial security for those leaving the workforce'—guarantees—even though it does nothing of the sort. (Are we to believe that retirees who have nothing other than CPP benefits and whatever they amass from an ORPP plan that is not set to begin for more than two years are 'guaranteed' financial security under" this Liberal plan? He's basically stating that they can say whatever they want to say.

We take great exception with that. I feel like sometimes we're going to be doing the reality check here on this side of the House. New Democrats know that in order to spend on the critical social programs needed in Ontario, we need to be fiscally sound. Because the Liberals don't seem to understand that point, they presented a plan that threatens service cuts that we haven't seen since Mike Harris.

Every time the Liberal government brings up the Mike Harris name, which happens a lot—and quite honestly, on the 407 deal it's a valid point. But when Bill 115 was brought to this Legislature in September 2012, Mike Harris wouldn't have gone that far. He would not have squashed collective bargaining rights. He would not have brought in a piece of legislation which would eliminate the rights and voices of those who work in the education sector. For me, this throne speech really is contradictory on so many levels.

This Liberal government did campaign against austerity. I think that's a fair thing to say. Yet their own muse—now he's being called a muse—economist Don Drummond, recently warned Ontario that Kathleen Wynne's plan will likely result in the elimination of 100,000 public sector workers. The government's response has been to send out mixed messages. One day, the new chair of the Treasury Board—congratulations—says that the Liberals will hold the line on public sector spending. The next, she says that perhaps there may be raises, if there's enough money. Maybe it's not coincidental that the ratings agencies are looking at a downgrade.

1630

What we are hearing are inconsistencies and contradictory comments with regard to the financial and the fiscal situation of this province, which we all have a shared responsibility to take ownership for. But there has to be this collaboration, this listening that people talk about outside of question period time.

If we are to reflect back on how we got here in this province, and what the Liberal record is—obviously some big promises are contained in this throne speech, but we need to remember the Liberal track record. Unemployment has been above the national average since January 2006. Ontario is still down 300,000 manufacturing jobs. During the last session, we were quite clear that the Liberals seemed to have just totally written off manufacturing, as if we don't want to make anything

anymore, when we have the research, when we have the innovation and when those jobs need to be created.

Hydro bills have increased by 300% since the Liberals took office, and they are projected to rise another 42% over the next five years. I just had a letter right here from the Brick Brewing Co. They have informed me that their last bill went up \$75,000 over their three facilities. That's an increase of 20%. We are not going to attract manufacturing, we are not going to attract these jobs, unless we are serious about getting hydro rates under control.

We brought this issue to the people of this province during the election. We wanted to make sure that there was some streamlining and alignment around the power authorities, those who are regulating our power sources, because there are efficiencies there. If you continue to do the same thing over and over and over again, then you're just going to get the same result.

So with regard to Brick, this is a company, actually, that has invested in innovation, that has created good local jobs. Is this how our government shows commitment to an Ontario craft brewer, or to small and medium-sized manufacturers? Energy has to be on the table when you are talking about job creation and when you are talking about strengthening the economy.

As was mentioned already, the throne speech doesn't talk about some key issues that we should all be concerned about: the high hydro bills for our households and for businesses. I've mentioned the Brick, but they certainly are not alone. The Brick is not alone. There is a reason why southwestern Ontario has listened so closely to some of the voices in our caucus. It's because they like what they're hearing, because we have some solutions, and we're willing to work with them to keep those jobs in those vulnerable areas and because they have not been listened to for so long.

What else wasn't in—oh, bullet trains to southwestern Ontario. I can tell you that I would have really appreciated a bullet train this morning from Kitchener–Waterloo to Toronto, because I was hydroplaning between two 18-wheelers in very terrible weather. I was really happy to make it here. At some points, my language was not the best, but I made it here safely. But the bullet trains, or the high-speed trains, which were touted prior to this budget as being a key part of getting southwestern Ontario's economy back on track, no pun intended, but also leading to greater productivity and safer travel—that's not in the throne speech. There's no mention of it there.

Kitchener city council is holding up construction projects like the Margaret Avenue bridge until it receives direction from this province, so there is a trickle-down effect. When the provincial government doesn't follow through on promises, especially around infrastructure investment, then it has a trickle-down effect to our municipalities. It's a natural thing that happens. They're not going to move forward with that Margaret Avenue bridge until it gets a firm commitment from the provincial government.

As already mentioned, high auto insurance rates—in the election, you would knock on the door, and you talked about the big issues: the economy and jobs. But it was the issues that affect the people directly. Insurance rates—they feel it. The people of this province understand that there's a fundamental lack of fairness with regard to auto insurance rates. Despite how well people drive, despite their driving record, those insurance rates continue to go up—even as the government says, “No, they're going down.” But the lived experience of the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, is contradictory to what you hear from that side of the House.

The Financial Accountability Officer—and I want to mention this because I was on the hiring committee to get the Financial Accountability Officer in place—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: As was I.

Ms. Catherine Fife: As was the member from Vaughan. As was Mr. O'Toole from—

Interjection: Durham.

Ms. Catherine Fife: —Durham. Good guy—I miss him already. Just for the record, Mr. O'Toole and I did not agree with the choice of the Liberal member on that committee. We are looking forward to going forward with that process, but in the press release that came from that member, it said that it was just me. I must be a very powerful person to stop that office from coming into place, and so just for the record—for the public record—I would like to put the truth right out there on the paper.

But I look forward to moving forward with that. That legislation passed in this House. It passed in this House. I think that everyone in the province of Ontario will acknowledge that a Financial Accountability Officer is needed. You can create a President of the Treasury Board, but you need someone who is outside of that boardroom cabinet table. You need a third party who can actually make sure that financial decisions going forward have some integrity. Imagine, that it have some integrity. And you know what? I look forward to that day when that happens, because it passed in this House, and regardless of the majority status, it still needs to happen, and we're going to follow through on that.

Child care: What was really interesting in the budget, and the throne speech doesn't necessarily address it, is that there was an acknowledgement that early childhood educators and personal support workers were very deserving of a wage increase. On this side of the House, we couldn't agree more. The personal support workers, in particular, when you walk the picket line with them, because they've been fighting for some pay equity for so long, you will see that they have essentially been holding the home care system together. Meanwhile, CCACs and LHINs get another manager of communications, another public relations manager. There are three intake workers in our local CCAC in Kitchener–Waterloo and they have nine managers. And yet personal support workers, last round, got a 20-cent-an-hour increase. There's a real inconsistency around priorities.

Ms. Cindy Forster: But they need full-time jobs.

Ms. Catherine Fife: They need full-time jobs and they need to work in safe conditions and their work needs to be acknowledged. And yet, in the throne speech there is no true commitment to stabilizing child care. This has been a long-standing issue with this government. When full-day kindergarten rolled out in the province of Ontario, there was no accounting for the negative impact that that program would have on community-based child care. There was no acknowledgement—and we know this because they had to catch up later on and then they threw the child care into the Ministry of Education, and so you're continually catching up. But a throne speech and a new budget would be a perfect opportunity to right that wrong. The time is always right to right a wrong, I think, and why not? Why not now in 2014?

So there is a litany of things that are not contained within this throne speech, and our leader has actually mentioned already a number of them. I wanted just to talk quickly though about this concept of an "activist centre" because we're going to be hearing this a lot. There's a lot of confusion, quite honestly, about it. It sounds really good, though. It sounds promising. It sounds like perhaps something that can—a promise can be broken, though. I think that we have to remember that on this side of the House. But the promise is to govern from the centre and also with an activist sort of vein, and within the framework, of course, of deficit reduction. I would respectfully suggest that those two concepts are at odds with each other and something has got to give.

So I think that our priority on this side of the House is to make sure that the people who are those front-line workers—and that's who we talked about during the election. We talked about the nurses and the personal support workers and the ECEs and the education workers, because there really isn't an acknowledgement that in the health care sector, for instance, where almost 20% of that funding goes to the top echelons of power and bureaucracy, which continues to grow at the expense and the cost of front-line services. We're going to fight for those people, because we see them as key people in the health care system and in the education system. I think it has to be said that this government does not have a strong record of ensuring that the people who are actually making a difference in the health care system—the people who are going into someone's home and helping them get their food and taking care of them, those personal support workers are the people who need to be supported. When we see hospital budgets being frozen for three consecutive years, you have to wonder who's going to go, because someone's going to have to go.

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I was actually really pleased: My local hospital just let go, I think, two vice-presidents. I guess the question remains: How many vice-presidents does a hospital need? I think that's an outstanding question, but I'm sure one of us will come up with a good idea about it.

As I mentioned, though, this throne speech, *Building Expectations Up* in Ontario, has some great inconsistencies to it. I was pleased, actually, to hear some of the

comments from my colleagues in the PC caucus, but I just want to give you a couple of examples. Many of you know that worker safety in the province of Ontario is an ongoing issue, and I'm going to be working very closely with our critic on this, because two people died in the last two weeks from falling. This is not a new phenomenon. These are tragedies and they are preventable accidents. There is a report on the books that the Liberal government had requested back in 2010, the Dean report, which called for mandatory fall protection training—not just a poster, but some actual training. Yet in the throne speech it says that you are going to follow through on protecting workers while supporting businesses. I'd have to say that this is an ongoing issue and a concern for me.

You also mentioned that through partnerships with businesses and persons with disabilities, your government will work to increase the number of employment opportunities for Ontarians of all abilities, yet as the AODA standards have rolled out in this province, there have been great inconsistencies. Our own member from Parkdale–High Park had to put a freedom-of-information request to the government to find out how many businesses in this province have failed to meet the compliance standards. Yet here in the speech it says you're going to follow through on that as well.

Ms. Cindy Forster: They're building new buildings without doing it.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Exactly. What a missed opportunity. The time to make a building accessible, so people can go to work, so people can gain access to employment opportunities, is as the building is being constructed, not after the fact, with a deadline of 2025.

There is of course worker safety, transit, youth jobs. Some of this stuff I think that we can actually feel a little bit good about. We fought for the youth employment strategy in the 2013 budget. We fought for the auto insurance, and we're going to continue to fight for that. We definitely fought for the five-day home care guarantee. We saw money directly flow because of our advocacy in those budget negotiations, if you will. I think it needs to be said that there are still opportunities to actually influence this budget.

The outstanding question that remains is: Will it still be the same budget, given the credit ratings that have come forward? Because if it is, we know what the future is going to be like. We know that you are going to have to make cuts and you know that we are going to fight those cuts, especially if they affect front-line workers.

There is a lot of work to be done in this province. The revenue problem that we have in this province stems from job creation, but there are savings, as we've indicated, in the health care sector and the energy sector, to find some alignment, to find some savings. Those opportunities do exist, and we are certainly—I have to remain hopeful, because we're looking at four years. So the tone and the tenor of this budget negotiation will be very interesting, I think. I'm certainly hopeful, and I know, as the caucus is as well, that we can influence the priorities of people in this House going forward. That's

our commitment. The people of this province gave us that job, and we're going to follow through.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Northumberland—Quinte West on a point of order.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Speaker, I just want to correct the record. During my deliberation earlier on today, I believe that one time I said, "June 2012." It should really be June 2014.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Further debate?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I am deeply honoured and humble to rise today for the first time in this Legislature as the new member representing Kingston and the Islands to speak to you on the throne speech. But first please allow me to give you some personal reflections on our great riding, a few tidbits on my past experience and how this has framed my standing here in the Legislature today.

The residents of Kingston and the Islands have put their trust in me to work hard and to act with integrity on their behalf. I accept this responsibility wholeheartedly and without reservation.

In addition, I will always be cognizant of and eternally grateful for the assistance, the energy, the imagination and the faith of my family, friends and the numerous campaign volunteers who worked with me. But for all of you, I would not be standing here today.

I would like to welcome to the Legislature—a warm welcome, in fact—my daughter Linnaea, my father and my partner, Chris, who have come from Kingston to be with me today. Chris, I owe you my eternal thanks for your unwavering support, your wisdom and your razor-sharp wit. No political campaign should be without a Chris. I couldn't think of a better person to join me on this journey. We are so blessed to have you in our lives.

I would also like to thank Dan Couture, who's up above us. Dan, can you stand up? When I told Dan that I was running back in December, he said to me plain and simple, and instantly, "Sophie, you will win." So thank you for that support.

I would also like to thank Sam Laldin. Sam has also travelled from Kingston to be with us today.

Interruption.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I apologize; I have to interrupt. We appreciate the presence in the galleries of our guests, but they're not allowed to participate in the debate, unfortunately.

So I'll return to the member for Kingston and the Islands.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was born and raised in Kingston, and I ask that you indulge me as I speak of my immeasurable love and affection for this great riding and its people, as we can see by evidence of those who are here today. Kingston and the Islands is a unique and truly beautiful place, situated at the confluence of natural waterways where the limestone meets the Shield.

We Kingstonians are proud of our heritage and culture, as illustrated by our many festivals, historic buildings and tourist attractions, and we are very protective of our natural environment. Needless to say, we are extremely happy about our 30-minute rush hour.

Interjections.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Sorry, folks.

I invite you all to visit our city and her islands and bask in a welcome that will make you feel as if you have arrived at home. Beyond our numerous picturesque vistas and rich historical haunts, I cannot describe in sufficient terms the great admiration that I have for the spirited people of this community.

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The makeup of our residents is unique and diverse. Consider the staff and students of Queen's University, St. Lawrence College and the Royal Military College. Then consider the soldiers, families and support staff at the Canadian Forces base. We have three acclaimed hospitals, vibrant business communities and artistic communities, world-famous restaurants and, of course, as you all know, too many prisons to mention. We also have Ojibwa Mohawk and Cree First Nations who call Kingston home.

Kingstonians are not afraid to fight for what they believe in, a fact that could not be better exemplified than when the federal government closed the prison farms. I applaud the activists who are part of that continuing protest, some of whom still hold a vigil every Monday evening, rain or shine, sleet or hail.

I would also like to say a few words today about my predecessor, John Gerretsen. John, I thank you. Your amazing spirit, your generosity—extended to me and to others—and your dedication to good governance will not be forgotten. Every day that I have been here thus far, your former colleagues have approached me and spoken of your outstanding commitment to our community. You have cared deeply for the underprivileged, and there are numerous examples of your good work and good heart in every corner of our riding.

Since this is the first day of the 41st Parliament of Ontario, I thought it apropos to speak a little bit about the past, about the future and about the journey that we in this room will share together. Seven months ago, I would not have imagined myself within these walls, never mind addressing my peers with this maiden speech. I feel truly blessed to be here. Over the course of time, however seasoned I become in deliberating the daily affairs of the province and our riding, I will never lose sight of the privilege of service that has been bestowed upon me by my community.

In my seven years of serving the federal interests of Kingstonians in the offices of the Honourable Peter Milliken, the former Speaker of the House, and the current MP, Ted Hsu, I had the good fortune to learn about the concerns and aspirations of our residents through what feels like the lens of a microscope.

At the same time, I became very mindful of the fact that we, as elected representatives, are charged with

acting in the best interests of all people, regardless of race, colour, economic background, gender, sexual orientation or political affiliation. In the widest sense, I believe that this speech from the throne embodies this complexity and responsibility profoundly.

In embracing fairness, accountability and collaboration, this government seeks to build trust and consensus. This in turn leads to greater political engagement and the empowerment of constituents. In this model, government can and will be a force for the good.

Each election is a repository of the electorate's hopes. Looking around this chamber today and last week, I think it is clear that Ontarians want more women in politics, they want more diversity in politics and they want a steady, progressive approach to managing all aspects of the financial and social economy.

In reintroducing the budget, already tabled in May—a budget widely praised at the time—this government has reaffirmed its commitment to an inclusive and innovative agenda, an agenda that will inspire our youth through opportunity, an agenda that will attract new businesses and new jobs to Ontario, an agenda that will invest in the next generation of transit and transportation infrastructure, an agenda that seeks to alleviate the causes of poverty and ill health, and, most importantly, an agenda firmly focused on fiscal responsibility.

On a personal level, I was inspired and I saw many others inspired by Premier Wynne's leadership. Her energy, her integrity, her positive approach and her unwavering commitment to building Ontario up steadily and sustainably without leaving any of its people behind clearly resonated with the wishes of a majority in this province. I share her vision of a fair and just Ontario. Perhaps more than anything, and I heard this on the doorstep time and time again, there's a yearning for public servants who live up to certain standards of good governance, like even-handedness and commitment to a wider public and community good. This expectation is surely a very reasonable one and it's one I wholeheartedly support and will strive to embody.

In the folklore of the Ojibway, one of Ontario's first peoples, whose land we share, this is the time of seven fires, a time of choice—a fork in the road, if you will. There are many challenges that lie ahead: food security, resource limits, maintaining clean air and water, poverty reduction, how we care for the aged, the sick and the mentally ill. The seeds of change planted in the way we govern today and in the investments we make in our people tomorrow will help our children and our children's children to overcome these challenges. Had my mother lived to see this day, she would have been so proud. Even though she passed away more than 10 years ago, her voice was heard through the people I canvassed, who knew her as a respected physiotherapist. It was in caring for her in her last year that I actually returned from my business life in Toronto to Kingston, so in some abstract sense it is because of her that I find myself back here in the provincial capital today. If it is true that the departed live in the hearts of those who love them—

thank you. Sorry. I wasn't going to do this, but I'm really tired. If it is true that the departed live in the hearts of those who love them, then surely she is here with me today.

Please allow me to borrow the words of Linda Ellis in her poem "The Dash" when she speaks of the punctuation mark between the date of our birth and the date of our death on a tombstone—and forgive me if you've heard it before.

For it matters not, how much we own,
the cars ... the house ... the cash.
What matters is how we live and love
and how we spend our dash....

So, when your eulogy is being read,
with your life's actions to rehash ...
would you be proud of the things they say
about how you spent YOUR dash?

I commit to this chamber that I will use my time in this great place steeped in tradition and history, this part of my own dash, working hard and never losing sight of how and why I got here. I will always feel gratitude to those who inspired me and helped me along the way and to the residents of Kingston and the Islands.

1700

When it comes time to leave this earth in whatever fashion, fancy cars, opulent homes—the stuff that some work so hard to gather—matters not. I believe that there is no greater legacy to leave behind than to have made a positive difference in the lives of others. That is what this journey is all about for me, and this is exactly the sentiment I see echoed in every aspect of this throne speech: a sincere wish to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to making that difference together with each and every one of you: with my colleagues on both sides of this floor, with the leaders of the opposition, with the Clerks in the House, with the staff in these great halls. I make a commitment to all of you that I will do my best to serve the people of Kingston and the Islands to the best of my ability. And of course I will work alongside our Premier to do whatever I can to make sure that this throne speech is carried out in this House and in our constituency offices to the best of my abilities.

I thank you. Je vous remercie tous du fond de mon cœur. Meegwetch.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Steve Clark: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member for Kingston and the Islands, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election. I know I had an opportunity a couple of weeks ago to meet you for the first time at the Ontario Volunteer Service Awards. I have to tell you, Speaker, that the speech she made here, speaking from the heart, is exactly the way she was that night speaking to volunteers in her community. She's an extremely genuine member, in the

time that I got to know her that one time, and in the chamber since then. It's so nice that your family is here, and some of your supporters.

I have to tell you that I think one of the great qualities that you express is similar to a number of members'. I know that the member for Ottawa South and myself—we were all working in a constituency office prior to our election. You've had some great mentors in the two members of Parliament you have worked for. I'm so glad that you mentioned your other mentor, your predecessor, John Gerretsen, who served this Legislature well for 19 years. I also had the pleasure of serving as a mayor at the same time that he was, so he gave me a lot of advice. Some of his advice when I was elected to this place I didn't take, for a number of reasons, but I always found that he was a good friend. I was always able to speak to him about issues, in sometimes a non-partisan way. When we couldn't speak that way, we at least respected each other's opinions.

I do want to tell you that you live in a beautiful city. I know many of my constituents go to Kingston and the Islands to work each day. Some of your constituents do play the odd time in Leeds–Grenville. I just want to say that it's very refreshing to have you come and speak from the heart, and I wish you well in your time in the Legislative Assembly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Bienvenue, Sophie. Welcome to Queen's Park. You know what? We're here. You're going to be sitting as a part of the majority government for the next four years, possibly a little bit more. It wasn't that long ago that I was sitting in the back corner over here and I was wondering, "What the heck am I doing here?" It wasn't that long ago. But you know what? I was really pleased to hear some of your comments that you were making where you are looking to build your own bridges. It's something that I pride myself on: working with people from the opposition, people within my own caucus and within government. You're going to enjoy the roller-coaster ride that you're going to be participating in over the next couple of years. Embrace it, because it's going to go by in the blink of an eye.

I can really relate to a lot of the sentiments that you brought up in regard to your mother. I lost my mum just about a year before I got elected. Mum was very much politically inclined, and she would be sitting here with me. So listen to your mum. She's going to be telling you a lot of things—some good, some you won't like. But listen to her. Also, look at building your own bridges.

There's one thing, speaking as someone who doesn't follow his own advice: Don't forget your loved ones at home. Make sure you find time for them, because they're the ones who permit you to do the job that you're doing here. They keep you grounded, they keep you solid and they make sure that you enjoy the job that you're doing here.

From our caucus to you, that was a wonderful speech. Bienvenue. Je suis encouragé de te voir ici et puis je suis encouragé de bâtir mes liens avec toi. Bienvenue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Granville Anderson: I don't know how I can follow such eloquence and such passion by the member from Kingston and the Islands. It was an excellent speech. She spoke from the heart, and she spoke with honesty and integrity and compassion. That's what we believe in as Liberals. It's refreshing.

All the members in this House are here with good intentions and here to serve the people of their community, and they are to be commended for that. We have a difference of opinion, but at the end of the day we are all here to serve the people who send us here.

Again, we have put forward a budget, which I believe in very strongly, which represents the people, especially in Durham. I was elected based on this budget, and I was supported by dozens of young people, because this budget presented them with hope and an opportunity to succeed and to develop the skills they need to compete in the 21st century—good jobs, good-paying jobs, good education and all the good things that are required to build a family and to build Ontario up.

The Premier was right when she said we build Ontario up. That's what we do, and that's what this budget does. That's what the pension plan does. It helps people who are less fortunate. I've seen it.

I went to one particular house and there was a gentleman who said, "Make sure you don't take my Trillium benefits away." I wasn't even quite sure what that was then, and he showed me a cheque for \$91. It was only \$91, but that's what he depended on. He also showed me a bill for \$24 that he couldn't afford to pay. If he had a proper pension, I am sure he would be able to pay and he would be able to survive.

As Liberals, that's what we believe in, and that's the Ontario I believe in.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jim McDonell: I, too, would like to congratulate the new member from Kingston and the Islands on her election to Queen's Park. I've been here just over two and a half years, and it is really a great honour to serve your riding in this very historic building and place.

Ontario is a great place to live. We think, as Progressive Conservatives, it could be better. We'll see over the next four years just how much of this throne speech we will see put forth.

1710

Now, I was also glad to hear her talk about John Gerretsen, somebody who had great respect in all parties, I believe, in this Legislature. John was an easygoing, good person to talk to and get some insight from. My days at Queen's—Kingston is a great city. I enjoyed Kingston immensely, and try and get back every year, actually, for homecoming. It's great to see the youth, how optimistic they are. It's our role here to make sure

we provide that reason for optimism, so that when they get out there are good jobs for them. That is a real concern. I have three children who also went to Queen's, and they're out looking for jobs. We want to make sure they're there for them. Ontario was always a place where people came to look for good jobs. We want to make sure we continue with that in the future.

Kingston also has the benefit of a lot of great public institutions. You've got St. Lawrence College as well as Queen's; KGH; the military base, RMC. So it's a source of lots of public income, maybe shielded from some of the effects that other places in the province have seen over the last number of years.

So look across the province and try to make decisions that benefit all of Ontario, not just cities. Congratulations and good luck.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our time for questions and comments, and I look to the member for Kingston and the Islands to reply.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you, everyone, for the wonderful comments and the reception today. I have to say, when I got here this morning and sat here in this room and listened to some of the noise, I was not sure what I'd gotten myself into, but alas, here we are. I do—

Interjection.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: We will be nice, yes. I do look forward to working with all of you.

My first political job was with Peter Milliken, the Speaker of the House, as we all know. I respected his nonpartisan stance. I understood what it meant to serve all constituents and have that role be utterly sacred. We were there for the people. We were there to find out what was going on in their lives, what was going wrong, how we could help, and politics didn't play a role. So I am probably one of the least political people who was running in our campaign locally, but I value the Liberal principles to help others, and I am very grateful for your words today in the House, in the Legislature. I enormously appreciate the warmth that has been extended to me and to John. I have so many wonderful words, but particularly to my family. You have all been amazing.

I'm sorry that my daughter Helene and my daughter Jennifer couldn't be here, and my brother. You've been there for me. You've helped me along. You've been there when I wasn't doing so well, when I was tired. You brought food. You played a role that was very, very important in my being here today, so eternal thanks to everyone.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I too would like to begin by saying thank you very much to the residents of Nipissing. It is a great honour to have spent two and a half years in this Legislature representing them, and I do look forward to the next four years, having been returned to this Legislature. So I do want to say thank you to everybody in Nipissing who placed their confidence in me.

My office on Main Street is always open and I look forward to good dialogue. My email is always accessible

and I look forward to hearing from the constituents. As always, we will continue to open our office in Mattawa, at city hall in Mattawa, the last Friday of every month, with our bilingual staff to take care of the people of Mattawa so they don't have to take the long drive, especially in the winter, into North Bay.

I want to begin today by reading something to this Legislature. This is a quote: "Ontario faces more severe economic and fiscal challenges than most Ontarians realize." The second part of the quote is, "Unless policy-makers act swiftly and boldly to prevent such an outcome, Ontario faces a series of deficits that would undermine the province's economic and social future."

Those aren't my words. Those aren't even from a PC press release either. In fact you can find them posted on the Liberal government's own website. Those are words from Don Drummond in the report that was commissioned by the Liberals and released in 2012: "Unless policy-makers act swiftly and boldly to prevent such an outcome, Ontario faces a series of deficits that would undermine the province's economic and social future."

Sadly, what we've seen since the Drummond report is a series of increasing deficits. If you look back to that year, the deficit was \$9.2 billion. It grew to \$11.3 billion the following year. It has grown to \$12.5 billion this year. This is the wrong direction and a very serious problem in terms of a deteriorating balance sheet that we have now found in Ontario.

Before the election, I had spoken about some of the real numbers in Ontario and the fact that it has been more than half a year in Ontario since we've actually seen any real numbers. I'm including the fall economic statement, and I'm including the budget.

Let me explain. It was last October when the finance minister failed to deliver the long-range assessment of Ontario's fiscal environment. He is obligated to do so under the government's own Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act. So I asked him in question period on October 21—I'll read you what I asked him: "Minister, the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act ... states, 'Within two years after each provincial election, the minister shall release a long-range assessment of Ontario's fiscal environment.' Minister, you're two weeks late. When will you be releasing the assessment" that you're legally required to release?

That was a question I asked last October. The answer was, "We have a fall economic statement that's coming out shortly. We've produced first-quarter results that achieve our opportunities and that show the success we've had to date." So he said, "They'll be in the fall economic statement."

However, when the fall economic statement came out, there were no medium-term outlook numbers included. In addition, individual ministry expense numbers were not listed for 2016 or 2017, just the total program spending, which magically falls in 2017 to zero and to a balanced budget, but there are no numbers in there to substantiate it. You have a number for revenue and a

number for expenses, but you don't see any line items in there.

Then in February of 2014, the minister announced he would not be presenting the third-quarter results on February 15, which, once again, the government is required to do under the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act.

This is very discouraging because more than half a year—it's coming up closer to a year in the fall, of course, since any actual numbers have been presented to this Legislature that will show whether the province is indeed on track to balance the budget by 2017-18.

As you know, I presented in this Legislature recently items that were disclosed from what were previously confidential documents between the Ministry of Finance and the Premier, and the Ministry of Finance and cabinet. I'll again read a couple of sentences which tell us why we don't have all of those numbers to show how they would balance.

For 2014-15 and 2015-16, the government is "not on track to meet ... budget deficit targets." This is provided by the Ministry of Finance's internal document of March 2013.

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Shortly after this document was given to the government, the Ministry of Finance came out with a news release that said that the government is on track to meet the steadily declining deficit targets outlined in the 2012 budget, to achieve a balance by 2017-18. So while the government was told by their own Ministry of Finance one thing—that they're not on track to balance—they came out and told the public the complete opposite of that—that they indeed are on track—by steadily declining deficits. But the deficits aren't declining. They're growing, from \$9.2 billion to \$11.3 billion to \$12.5 billion.

We will continue to bring these items to light, because these are so important. When you see the financial news that is out there about Ontario, you'll begin to understand why these various rating agencies are coming up with these negative announcements for Ontario. They don't have the numbers from the government either, and the documents that they do have show that we have increasing deficits, and they show the trouble that we're in.

So when you see a headline in the Financial Post on June 13, the day after the election—now, all of the rating agencies were respectful and during the writ period never made a comment. I think that was fair of them. It's our job as the opposition to bring those facts to light, which we attempted to do, but on the very day after, on June 13, in the Financial Post, there's a headline stating "BlackRock Says It's on 'High Alert' for Ontario Debt Downgrade after Wynne Victory."

I'll read you the sentence from the Post: "We're on high alert that S&P will downgrade Ontario," said Aubrey Basdeo, head of Canadian fixed-income in Toronto at BlackRock Inc., the world's biggest money manager." Speaking of the Premier: "She's front-loading the deficit or the total debt in anticipation future years

will benefit from stronger growth. They're just looking at the raw numbers and they're seeing a deteriorating financial balance sheet."

So because they see the deficit increasing, and they see no evidence of balancing a budget, BlackRock said they're on high alert for Ontario. This was the day after the election. They finally ended with, "It's going to be a challenge for the province to hit their out-year spending." The province will need to issue more bonds as a result, and what does that mean? That means borrowing will cost more money. We need to borrow more. Our interest rates already, as you've heard from many speakers, are the third-highest.

So what you saw this week, as well, was Moody's, another credit rating agency, coming out with a downgrade on their outlook. Now, that's very serious. The day after the budget, May 2, Moody's came out with a credit watch. During the election period, they did not break their silence. BlackRock came out immediately, and now Moody's is out with a downgrade of the outlook. Speaker, I will say to you that that is foreshadowing the S&P downgrade that will certainly come the week of July 14 or 21, once we get to this point.

Again, Speaker, I bring this up because those who are in the know fully understand that there is no balanced budget coming from this government. We saw it in the throne speech. We see it in the budget that's about to be re-presented. Norman Levine of Portfolio Management said it best when he said, "They have not articulated in any way, shape or form how they would get there." I think he says it best.

Speaker, there is no mention of the cuts that will be coming from this government, but I can tell you, when I speak on behalf of the 40 nurses and health care professionals who were terminated in North Bay, and 290 who were terminated province-wide during the election—it was announced that 60 beds in my hometown of North Bay in the brand new hospital would be closing. Some 34 more people lost their jobs. Last week, eight teachers were laid off at the Near North District School Board. All of these things are a result of not being able to balance the budget. That's why we saw 39 fewer days of cataract surgeries last year. That's why we saw diabetes testing strips cancelled. That's why we saw physiotherapy for seniors being cancelled. It's because there is no balanced budget, and there is no balanced budget in the forecast.

I've heard others here talk about the gas plant. I do want to speak very briefly about it—only in the context of the throne speech, Speaker; I'm not about to relive that battle today. In the throne speech, we heard the Premier's words, through the Lieutenant Governor, that they're looking forward to the final report. Well, I take that as a signal that there will be no more hearings. Certainly with a majority government, we're never going to see another document. We fought so hard through a lot of tremendous battles to get our hands on, first, the 36,000 documents, followed by 20,000 documents, which grew up to 300,000, where we learned that it wasn't \$40

million, it was \$1.1 billion. But all those documents that we got, especially in estimates as well—I fear that those days are over.

Estimates taught us through the documents that we received that there is no plan to balance the budget. The Ontario Northland is another one. When the government announced they were having a fire sale of Ontario Northland because they would save \$265 million, I stood up that day and said there's not a chance you're going to have any savings. It took almost a year—in fact, it took a little over a year—to prove that there were no savings. We called in the Auditor General. The NDP joined me in the vote. We won the vote. We called the Auditor General in. We looked at the documents that were previously confidential and saw that it would cost—cost—\$820 million to sell Ontario Northland, not save \$265 million.

So when I heard the throne speech that said “bring the final report for the gas plant hearings,” I was saddened by that part. That was code for, “There are no more documents. You're never going to see what really are the underpinnings.”

That brings to mind MaRS, when the scandal that broke during the campaign—we learned that the purchase of the MaRS building, the bailout of a private American real estate developer, may cost the taxpayers \$500 million. There was no mention in the throne speech, but they need to tell us how much this is going to cost.

During the campaign, we did learn that there would be a \$45.7-million shortfall in operating costs because MaRS would be running in the red. We do know that there was \$317 million in payments. We did learn that the government planned to break leases throughout Toronto and move people into there, government offices into there. We did learn that the \$106 million would be spent in fit-up costs and the province would be paying \$11 million a year for 40 years—that's \$440 million—in amortization costs above and beyond the \$317-million bailout.

But what we learned afterwards from whistle-blowers—we haven't heard much about this—was that there was a \$5.2-million swap breakage cost and consulting fees to the government's consulting for those 30 days of work. We also learned there is a debt service guarantee that was activated. We want to know to whom. How much is the government on the hook for? We also learned that interest rates on overdue rent were payable. Again, from whom and how much?

These are the kinds of things I would have hoped we would hear more details about. Instead, we heard sort of loose guidelines about an ORPP, an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. Again, we did learn throughout the campaign that 86% of small businesses are opposed to this; 53% say they will reduce staff. But that shouldn't come as a surprise to the government, because one of those formerly confidential documents that we received was from the Ministry of Finance. Let me quote from the Ministry of Finance documents talking about this payroll tax. What you will receive as a result of it are “lower

business investment, relocation of business to other jurisdictions, reduced work effort, out-migration of people.”

1730

This is your own Ministry of Finance telling you that if you go ahead with this ORPP, this Ontario Registered Pension Plan, you will lose 150,000 jobs in the province of Ontario. That's the number from your finance ministry if you match the CPP. To put it in their exact wording, you will lose 18,000 jobs in Ontario for every \$2 billion you take out of the system in this tax. So that's why your own ministry said to the Premier, in a confidential memo, that you're going to have lower business investment, relocation of business, reduced work effort and lost jobs by the tens of thousands. That is your own ministry's advice to you in saying, “Don't do this; this is very harmful to Ontario.”

I do want to conclude with a bright light, if I can call it that. This is the billion-dollar commitment to the Ring of Fire. Now sadly, there's no time frame to the Ring of Fire. There was an announcement about forming the development company.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Good news

Mr. Victor Fedeli: It is good news. However, it is the fifth time you've announced this, so we're hoping that maybe this time it might stick. I am going to hold out good hope. I had a conversation with the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. I said, “Minister, you are here for four years. This cannot wait another five years of no activity.” I've been to the Ring of Fire five times. I've watched it deteriorate to what it is and I said, “I pledge to help you in any way. I will help you in any way because we need to have this to kick start the economic activity in the north.”

The bottom line, Speaker, is that spending is going up, revenue is going down, and both are heading the wrong way. Spending is going up, revenue is down. The Bank of Canada told us that we will not make our revenue targets in Ontario for 2013-14 and next year. Speaker, that's very concerning to us because the throne speech—and the budget that we have coming next week—as they've told us, it will be the same budget—has \$5.7 billion in additional spending. That is worrisome because we have a \$12.5-billion deficit this year, and this additional \$5.7 billion in spending, that's not just this year's spending. This is permanent. This is baked into every budget going forward; that's what's so concerning. As I think the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke called it earlier—a dichotomy.

We have great aspiration to provide all of these services and no plan to balance the budget. An offer to balance the budget, an aspiration to balance the budget, but both go in diametrically opposed directions. So you've got the Bank of Canada telling us that our revenue is going down in Ontario, and the Premier and the finance minister telling us that spending is going up. They're both going the wrong way. The hole in the middle is getting larger and people are getting more concerned. As you've heard others say, interest is our

third-largest ministry, if it was a ministry, and, Speaker, that's where we need to draw some attention. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Wayne Gates: First of all, I'd like to thank the residents of Niagara Falls, Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake for giving me the honour and the privilege to come back for the 41st Parliament. And also, I know the members who are here and the Speaker—Speaker, I know you'd like this as well: The 'stache is back, so I'm really pleased for that. I know a lot of people are.

I'd like to congratulate all parties, the new MPPs who have gotten elected. It is a thrill and an honour to be here, and I'm really looking forward to listening to the comments from the other newly elected MPPs. I know I enjoyed my 20 minutes when I got elected, so I'd like to congratulate the MPP who spoke earlier.

I want to get a couple of points in about my riding, which I believe weren't addressed.

There is no allocation of funding or a firm commitment for year-round GO train service to Niagara Falls. I've spoken on this a number of times.

There's no mention of support of the horse racing industry or the horse racing partnership. When you take a look at the horse racing industry in Fort Erie, they're down to 37 days. Their races are four, five or sometimes six horses. You watch Woodbine yesterday, with 30,000 people there, where they had 13 races of 10, 11, 12, 13 horses. We need that in Fort Erie. There are 1,000 jobs there that can be taken care of, just like that. When you talk about the highest unemployment in Niagara, we have to do that. We need to bring the slots back to Fort Erie. That's another 250 jobs.

They're important things, easy things that can be done by the Liberal government.

Then you take a look at the GO service to Niagara. In the Niagara area, we have the Falls. Some 11 million tourists come to Niagara Falls every year. They need to have GO service so they can come. Take a look at the 12 mayors who are supporting GO. They're saying it's a game-changer. The regional council is saying that—

Hon. Jeff Leal: Jim Bradley supports it. What about Jim?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I would love to meet with Jim. He knows. Me and Jim go back a long time.

I tell you, we have to get GO to Niagara, and the Liberals can do it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

M^{me} Marie-France Lalonde: Bonjour, monsieur le Président. J'aimerais remercier les gens d'Orléans pour m'avoir élue et mon prédécesseur, M. McNeely, pour les 11 ans de service qu'il a faits au sein de cette Chambre.

J'aimerais mentionner à mon collègue que nous avons subi et vécu la pire récession depuis 88 ans. De ce fait, tout comme le gouvernement fédéral, nous avons dû faire un investissement majeur et faire des partenariats pour aider l'économie de notre province, ce qui a contribué

effectivement à une augmentation de notre dette. Mais j'aimerais souligner à M. le Président que notre dette est très comparable au gouvernement fédéral.

Nous avons et nous allons maintenir, dans notre discours du trône, une affirmation de balancer le budget pour 2017-2018 en favorisant une approche d'investissement dans l'infrastructure et dans le transport tout en continuant en partenariat avec les entreprises. Cet investissement va nous permettre de faire de l'emploi aujourd'hui et dans les années à venir. Merci.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments. The member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and, again, congratulations to you on your appointment. I know you'll do a fine job and represent the whole House well.

It's a pleasure to stand and bring some comments in regard to my colleague from Nipissing, our finance critic for the PC Party. One thing with Vic is that he does everything in a thorough fashion. He does his homework, he's always prepared, and he brings facts to the table. In his dissertation, he gave a lot of details.

He talked about the pension plan. If they implement this—I heard at the front door, every day of the campaign, from small business, medium business and large business that they will be losing jobs. Some of them may move, in fact. I think he used the number of 150,000 potential jobs we're going to lose in this province, at a time when we're already way above the average of what we should have.

He talked about the Ring of Fire—again, something that could, in my mind, probably bring us back to being a manufacturing sector. It could bring our economy back. They've had their 10 years in government to implement this, and we're still no further ahead. In fact, Cliffs, as we all know, walked away last fall.

MaRS, a \$500-million scandal: After the gas plants, after eHealth, after Ornge, just when you thought it couldn't get any worse, now they're talking \$500 million—potentially a billion dollars—that they're going to waste on yet another boondoggle.

He talked about interest debt. The third-largest expenditure of this government is interest on our debt. Every single dollar that we pay is not going to front-line health care. It's not going to the disadvantaged and those people who don't have a voice. It's not going to people with special needs. It's not going to Community Living and kids with mental disabilities. It's not going to people who need those strips for diabetes.

That credit rating has already come out and said that there's a warning that it may get downgraded. That's going to add another half a billion to the interest payments. That not only affects us, but it also affects hospitals. It affects school boards. It affects municipalities in the amount of interest they're paying.

1740

Spending is going up; revenue is going down. It's heading the wrong way, and it continues to be

Liberalnomics. We can't afford it, Mr. Speaker. We need to make a change.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It is indeed an honour to be representing the people in my constituency again from Windsor-Tecumseh. Congratulations to all and to all the new MPPs, those who have spoken today, and the members of my caucus, the new members from Sudbury, Oshawa, and of course Windsor West.

The member from Nipissing was talking about his concerns about the financial future of this province. I must say the member from Nipissing is a man of high integrity who speaks very well on his critic's portfolio on matters of high finance. He has some questions about the election promises, the expensive promises, and how the government is going to pay for them, as do we on this side of the House.

When I was going door to door, Speaker, people would say, "Why didn't you support the budget?" I said, "Well, the last time the NDP supported the budget, there was a handful of promises they made to us as New Democrats for that support. They haven't kept them. If they can't keep two or three promises, how do we expect the Liberals to keep more than 70 new promises?" So that was easy to explain.

I believe my leader earlier today talked about the Trojan Horse budget. It is a Trojan Horse budget, or a budget of smoke and mirrors, if you will. Ontario is a land of great promise, but we should not become known as the land of broken promises, and I'm afraid that's where we're headed with the many promises that were made in this budget.

I know my friends in the Conservatives like to say they've sprinkled some pixie dust across Ontario in order to get the majority government. Well, you can fool some of the people some of the time, but you can't fool anyone west of London, obviously, because it hasn't worked with all the pixie dust that was sprinkled around the province.

I would like to talk more about harness racing. I know I'm almost out of time, but please. We only get 13 racing dates in our part of the province, and we need a lot more than that. I'd like to speak to that more at a future date.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time for questions and comments. We return to the member for Nipissing for his response.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I do want to thank the member from Niagara Falls and the member from Windsor-Tecumseh both for your passionate speeches, especially about the racing days. You have 37 days; you have 13 racing days. In Sudbury, they have zero. It's gone now. That sector is gone. The jobs are gone. The revenue to the city is gone. So I do want to thank you for your commentary about that.

To the member from Ottawa-Orléans, thank you very much for your thoughtful comments. Now, I know it's your first shot at the talking points, but I have to say to you one thing: Blaming the recession and blaming the

feds: Those are yesterday's talking points. When you think about the fact that we have a \$12.5-billion—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I would ask the government members to come to order. The member for Nipissing has the floor, and I'm going to give him a few extra seconds.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: When you look across the country and you see that every other province, collected, with the federal government—that their deficits combined are a fraction of our one deficit of—

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: You can't shake your head "no" when the answer is yes. Look it up. When you add up all their deficits and you add up the federal—almost balanced—you will find that.

You also talked about the fact that you are on target to balance the budget, but again I bring your attention—and when I'm here tomorrow, I'll forward the ministry documents to you that say you are not on track to balance the budget. I'll dig up the actual confidential documents and I'll send them over to you. You will see.

To the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, I thank you for your always thoughtful comments.

Speaker, thank you for the extra seconds to make up for the interference we had.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

M. Gilles Bisson: J'aimerais débiter en disant, premièrement, merci au monde de Timmins-Baie James qui m'a rapporté ici à l'Assemblée pour la septième fois. C'est quelque chose dont je suis très reconnaissant et je veux dire au monde de mon comté un gros remerciement.

I just want to say at the beginning, before I get into the throne speech debate, that I want to thank the people of Timmins-James Bay for having brought me back here for the seventh time. I appreciate it, I understand it, and I am humbled. I will continue to do the work that I have to do in order to represent the people of Timmins-James Bay.

That being said, I've got to say something happened along the way to the Legislature from the last budget. The government—I was paying attention, as were all of us, during this election process—was quite interesting. The funny thing about Liberals is, when it comes to wanting to run in an election, they never want to sound like a Liberal; they want to sound like a New Democrat. So they campaign like New Democrats, and once they get over here, we start to find out that they're really a bunch of Tories in a hurry.

If you look at what is going on through this throne speech, and that is going to be the precedent of what is going to happen in this budget, there are more things in this budget that are coming that, quite frankly, would make most progressives reel in really understanding what the government is up to. If you look at the budget document that was presented here in May and you take a look at what the government said in the throne speech, there are a number of initiatives there that are quite troubling.

They're talking about privatizing some of the largest assets in the province of Ontario, be it OPG, be it hydro, be it LCBO.

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm not saying they're going to do it all, but your Premier has said today that, in fact, we're not ruling anything out. We look at all proposals, and we'll decide what to do based on what we're presented with.

But the fact that the government is actually prepared to look at the selling of assets such as OPG, Hydro One and others, I think, is quite troubling, as a New Democrat, because we understand in our history that we nationalized in some cases, or we created crown corporations, for a reason. That is, we understood when we set up Ontario Hydro that it was an economic development tool. It was important for the province of Ontario to provide cheap, affordable power not only to its citizens when it comes to paying the bill at their homes, but also to industries across this province if we were going to attract people to invest in the province of Ontario.

As a result of having, at that time, the cheapest electricity prices in North America, Ontario was able to attract very large investments in this province when it came to mining, forestry, manufacturing and other such industries that utilize large amounts of power, because the original crown corporation known as Ontario Hydro of the day essentially produced electricity and sold it back almost at cost. Whatever it cost to run the system and to invest in the new builds is what Ontario Hydro would charge, and as a result, we had some of the lowest hydro prices in the province of Ontario.

What's really interesting is that when the government was in opposition to the Tories, back in the days of Ernie Eves, I used to listen to the energy critic, and I used to listen to then-leader Dalton McGuinty, who you don't name anymore. At least, now you started again because you're into a majority government—

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, now that you've got a majority government, you mention his name; I understand. He was a liability prior to that.

But I used to listen, and they used to be reeling in opposition to the Conservatives when it comes to the government, being the Tories, of the day trying to privatize the hydro system. My God. You thought that the Liberals had been wounded mortally when you used to listen to Ernie Eves say, "We will find a role for the private sector in the hydro system of Ontario." I used to listen to the Liberal energy critic and the then Leader of the Opposition, Mr. McGuinty, and they railed against Mr. Eves. They railed against the direction that government was taking, and they promised how virtually they would never do that and they would turn the clock back.

Well, again, they campaigned as if they were a bunch of New Democrats back then. They got elected and what did they do? The Liberals have been in charge of the largest privatization—the largest privatization—of our electricity system in the history of this province. There is

now more private power being generated in this province than we've ever had before. What's worse is, the contracts that you negotiated by way of the FIT program have made it so that we pay more than it costs a crown corporation to generate the same amount of power. And we wonder why our hydro bills have gone up?

Now what we've also got is, we have five agencies instead of one. It used to be Hydro One. Now you've got OPG, Hydro One and others that are there, essentially all doing the same thing, all with their own administrations, spending far more of the ratepayers' money than they have to, jacking up the price. What has been the result? Southwestern Ontario has been decimated. If you look at London, Chatham, Windsor and a number of other communities in the southwest, we've seen factory after factory close down in this province—

Interjection.

1750

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —and Hamilton, and northern Ontario and Timmins with Xstrata Copper. One of the major reasons—I'm not saying the only reason; in the case of Xstrata Copper, it was the only reason—is the price of electricity. Now when we talk to people who want to do investments or expansions in Ontario, one of the things that's holding them back is the hydro prices that this government is charging.

This is from the party that says they're progressive. Progressive, my eye. When these guys get to government, they're nothing but a bunch of Tories, and a good example of that is what they're about to do, possibly, when it comes to the privatization of a whole bunch of other services in Ontario.

People will forget that there's a process that was set up by the previous government, in the minority Parliament, when Mr. McGuinty was there, and it was kept after Madame Wynne became the leader. It was a process by which they would take stock of all of the agencies that they have in the province of Ontario—Hydro One and whatever else they might be—and take a look at which ones we should keep and which ones we should sell off. It's actually a part of what this budget is all about.

I say to my friends across the way—and I mean this in all sincerity: If I listened to you during an election, I might be tempted, if I didn't know a heck of a lot, to vote for you. But once I look at you in government, I begin to realize that you guys, quite frankly, are a bunch of Tories in a hurry.

If you take a look at—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You're Tories in a hurry; there's no question about that.

If you take a look at other initiatives that you have—take a look at your pension proposals. We're probably like-minded on the creation of a public pension plan similar to the CPP. In fact, it was Andrea Horwath who suggested that some years ago. There were differences in what we were proposing, but that's a whole other debate. But one of the things you're now saying is that you want to put in place a PRPP. You want to put in place Stephen

Harper's pension plan, where hard-earned dollars that we make from our employers would be put into a pool-type RRSP where banks and financial institutions are able to get away with making larger fees and more money than they would otherwise.

I think the argument is that we shouldn't be pushing people into more RRSP-type solutions—being PRPP in this case—and doing what Stephen Harper is doing. What you should be doing is looking at what we can do to secure the income of people, not only when it comes to pensions, but when it comes to the cost of living.

We all knocked on doors. You're not going to tell me, as Liberal members of this caucus who got elected, that you didn't knock on doors where people said to you, "My hydro bill is going through the roof. What are you going to do about it? My auto insurance is going through the roof. What are you going to do about it? Gas prices are going through the roof. What are you going to do about it?" You heard the same things that we did.

What's really amazing is that you didn't learn anything through that election. You guys figured you wanted a majority; therefore, "We can do what we've got to do."

I heard the Premier, in the throne speech, saying, "Oh, we're going to reach across the aisle." She sounded like Bill Clinton. Remember how Bill Clinton was going to reach across the aisle? Obama: "Reach across the aisle, and we're going to find a non-partisan way to work together." Well, we're finding out that that's really not the case. Just watching the actions of this government, in fact, you guys aren't doing that. You're prepared, quite frankly, to do a whole bunch of things that are going to create a fairly significant problem for Ontarians in this province.

I'd just say that Liberals must be taken with a grain of salt. The great thing about being a Liberal, as my good friend Michael Prue, who I miss dearly in this place, used to say—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I miss him dearly. He was a great member. I would say that the Liberals—how did he put it again? I may get this wrong: Liberals have principles; if you don't like this one today, they've got another one tomorrow. In the words of Michael Prue—

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, that was Michael Prue.

Mr. Bill Walker: No, that wasn't Michael Prue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We have approximately five minutes to go, and I would ask the House to come to order, to allow the member for Timmins–James Bay to sum up his speech. I need to be able to hear.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I say to my good friends across the way: We look at this throne speech, and we look at what's in this budget. The government says they're going to introduce virtually the same budget that they had the last time. What we're saying is that what's in that budget, quite frankly, are a number of things that are very, very troubling.

That's why we call it a Trojan Horse budget. You take a look at a number of initiatives that you put forward, that you're proposing in that budget, and we can find ourselves going down a road in this province that I think most people would not have voted for. I think what people heard during the election—they certainly heard that they didn't like the austerity moves put forward by Mr. Hudak. Quite frankly, that was—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Listen, I'm being fair; it was an issue in this election.

What people clearly said is that they didn't want to go down the way of losing 100,000 jobs. If you take a look at what Mr. Drummond said the other day on TVO with your good friend Mr. Paikin, in fact, if the government is going to reach the targets that it puts forward in its own budget, they're going to have to find a way to cut a number of jobs, and he suggested that that number is probably close to 100,000.

It's going to be interesting to see, Mr. Speaker—as we look at the clock ticking down—that in fact, the government is going to be in an interesting situation come a year from now. Will they still be able to say to Ontarians, "We're the progressives of this province"? Or probably, more likely, will they be saying, "In fact, we hate to admit it, but really, we're the guys who ran from the left but are actually governing from the right"?

With that, I'll save the rest of the time for the next time that we speak.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): It being close to 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1756.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnot, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
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Bento Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
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Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Cimino, Joe (NDP)	Sudbury	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
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Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
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Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	

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Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
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Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
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Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
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Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
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MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonnell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Orziatti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Premier / Première ministre
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
		Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

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Chair / Président: Vacant

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
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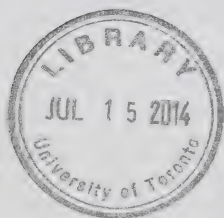
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Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 8 July 2014

Mardi 8 juillet 2014



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 8 July 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 8 juillet 2014

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.
Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on July 7, 2014, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, I just want to take this occasion during this throne speech to outline a couple of things that I think the government needs to reflect on in light of this particular throne speech.

This government is trying to put itself forward as a progressive government, a government that is doing the right things for all people all of the time. I don't doubt that there is some goodwill on the part of government members and the government generally to do some of these things, but I think for them to try to portray themselves as being this hugely progressive government that's always doing the right thing for all of the people all of the time leaves a little bit to be desired. I just want to go through two or three things that are happening where I live that I think exemplify what this government is not doing, and what they continue to fail to do even after this particular election.

The first one is that the government says, "We're the progressives. We're the ones who are going to do what's right for the people of Ontario and we're going to stand to make sure that government is there for people when they need it." Yet, when you look at northern Ontario, who is it that's privatizing the ONTC? Who's selling off Ontera? It's the Liberal government across the way that's decided that they're going to take a mantra out of the Conservative books and themselves act like a bunch of Conservatives when they get to government and actually sell off Ontera, which is one of the profitable arms of the ONTC, the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission. They're going to sell it off. Supposedly, Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals are trying to say, "Oh, we're the progressives. We're the ones who stand for making sure that we shore up services that people need across this province and make the investments that allow us to be able to function as a province."

I, for one, and I think a lot of members of my caucus, the NDP caucus, would agree that those investments are necessary. But why is it right for the government to have cancelled the only train that we have in northeastern Ontario, the only means to transport people all the way from Moosonee down to Toronto by rail—at the same time say it's okay to cancel that but it's also right to make an investment in transportation infrastructure—namely transit, subways and others—in the city of Toronto and other great cities of this province?

Now, I want to say up front that I think the investments in the city of Toronto are needed. I think it's yet to be determined, by the end of this particular four-and-a-half-year mandate, if the government actually would have moved on those issues. I think they portray this as an issue that they're interested in, certainly, but when it comes to actually delivering for the people of the city of Toronto, I'm not convinced that, in fact, they're going to do so. All I know, sitting as a northerner, is that I look at what is immediately affected by the people that I represent, and we have lost our only transportation train connection in northeastern Ontario.

It is a Liberal government under Kathleen Wynne that has decided cancel the train. It was Dalton McGuinty's government that started it, but certainly Kathleen Wynne could have reversed it. She had a year in government to do so before this election. Not only has she agreed to continue Dalton McGuinty's legacy of cancelling the train, she has also said that she's going to accelerate the sell-off of Ontera, the profitable telecommunications wing of Ontario Northland.

So how can a government on the one hand, or, I say, a political party on the one hand portray itself as being this progressive movement that's going to do all that is good for the people of Ontario and ensure to preserve public services, when they're prepared to sell off Ontario Northland, an agency of the crown that has been there for over 100 years, something that even Mike Harris didn't do, quite frankly, when he was in power? He had looked at the possibility of selling off the train to CN and decided to back off. Here we have the Liberals outdoing the Conservatives when it comes to a move to the right on privatization. So I say, in that particular example, job not well done.

I look at another one, and this is somewhat related but very important to the economy of northern Ontario, and that's in the case of forestry. We have mills across northern Ontario that have shut their doors partly because of, yes, what happened to the North American economy and what's happened with the market when it comes to the

sale of wood. But where you have people who are prepared to invest in their mills and to be able to keep their mills open and create the wealth and create the jobs in northern Ontario, there's been little in the way of support from the government.

I look at Little John Enterprises in the city of Timmins as a good example of that. Little John made an investment of quite a lot of money, over \$1 million, in order to do an expansion to that mill, in order to be able to produce more and higher-quality wood that he can sell into the market. What he's lacking is a commitment from the government on the part of wood allocation for that particular mill. When they did the expansion to the mill, there was an understanding that the government would make sure that there would be an allocation of timber that would go to that mill so that they can be guaranteed a supply of wood, as mills need to be able to operate. Here we are, a number of years after that mill is open, and Little John is still having to deal with the open market trying to get wood.

Now, in a time where there are a lot of sawmills that are down as a result of the shutdown we've seen in northern Ontario, he's able to get some wood. But he's able to get wood at a much higher price, which means to say that his operating cost is higher and he is not secured should the market turn around, and it will turn around. In time, there will be a huge demand for wood, and what does an operator like Little John Enterprises do when trying to compete with the large multinationals that operate mills in northeastern Ontario? He will be at a disadvantage when it comes to the price of wood because he will have to compete on the open market, and that's not how the wood allocation system should have worked in the first place.

The wood allocation system was always that you allot wood to a mill so that they're guaranteed a supply so that they can finance themselves and they can operate knowing what the price of the wood is going to be. What this government has done is taken the wood allocation system and turned it entirely on its ear. I just say to the government across the way, that is not what a progressive government does. What a progressive government does is it finds a way to balance the interests of large and small when it comes to operators in the forest industry and makes sure that the public will and the public good is reflected in the policies that come forward.

Put on top of that what you've done with the price of hydro. You have managed to put places like Xstrata Copper—where I represent—in the city of Timmins out of business as a result of the high price of power, but those that still stand, like Little John, like Tembec which operates a paper mill up in Kapuskasing, and a number of operators in my riding and across northern Ontario—you've really put those people in a hard position.

Where was the government speaking about how they're going to make hydro affordable for homeowners and how they're going to make hydro affordable for industry in this province as a progressive move? Somehow or other they tried to say that we, as New Demo-

crats, because we said that it's important that people have affordable power when it comes to being able to power up their homes and not having to pay hydro bills that are going through the roof—they were trying to say that somehow or other that wasn't a progressive thing to do. Well, I'm sorry. If mum and dad, if Jane and Joe Ontario, are not able to pay their hydro bills, I don't see that, quite frankly, as a progressive thing. I see that as regressive.

What politics should be about is about making sure that people are able to live in this province, able to prosper in this province and able to afford to purchase the services that they need. So I just say to the government across the way, you can, as much as you want, try to position yourself as being progressive, but for those people back home who are trying to pay their hydro bills, to those industries back home that are trying to pay their hydro bills, I don't think being progressive is doing nothing about the price of electricity. In fact, your own Minister of Energy, prior to the last election, said that hydro rates would be going up yet another 44% over the next number of years—that on top of increases that we've had in hydro alone already that have put electricity prices through the roof.

0910

So this government can try to pretend as much as they want that in fact they are a progressive government. I believe that this government is essentially a Conservative government in action, one that campaigns like New Democrats in order to sound good during the campaign, but when they get to government continues doing the same kinds of things and the old kind of politics that we've seen around this place for far too long.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It's my pleasure to spend a couple of minutes on the comments from the member from Timmins-James Bay. It's becoming more and more obvious that although I wasn't here for some two and a half years, not much really changes. It's hard to believe that the member from James Bay would accuse the Liberal Party or the government of being Conservative. If anybody took part in the last election, which I'm sure he did, and I did—I mean, they had no platform. They kind of borrowed from Conservatives, from us. We talked about an Ontario pension plan, which was their idea, frankly, Speaker, and they turned their backs on seniors in Ontario when the time came.

They talk a lot about the cost of energy, and he's right: The energy costs are high. But it would be nice to see a suggestion from them or the official opposition about what they would do. It's fine to complain. Yes, gasoline is expensive. I drive about 3,000 or 4,000 kilometres a month and I know how expensive gasoline is. But they never make any concrete suggestions—I'm not even saying concrete that one could apply, but even to suggest something that would alleviate some of those costs.

Speaker, they are in opposition, and I respect their role to hold the government accountable, but it would also be

very nice to partner with us as a government to find the proper solution, not just throwing windows in the air.

I look forward to the rest of the debate on the throne speech. I think it's a very balanced throne speech. It outlines the plan that we got elected to proceed with.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further comments and questions?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I spoke at length yesterday—in fact, I spoke for 20 minutes yesterday—on this throne speech.

Mr. John Yakubuski: It seemed longer.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Maybe it did seem a little longer for those who were paying attention, John.

I have to say there was a theme that I've seen coming out so far. We have a government that is promising a tremendous amount on one side, and a tremendous amount of expectations on the other side. Speaker, you simply can't have both. We've got a \$12.5-billion deficit forecast for this year, up from \$11.3 billion last year, up from \$9.2 billion the year before. Obviously, the deficits are going the wrong way: They're getting larger instead of smaller. Yet the promises are also growing. So you've got a growing deficit that the government promises to bring to balance in 2017-18, and you've got a growing list of expenses. This budget that they're bringing next week offers \$5.7 billion in new spending, yet somehow they are magically going to balance the deficit, which is at \$12.5 billion this year. So as a result, we've seen Moody's, we've seen BlackRock, we've seen other credit agencies and financial institutions offer downgrades, offer outlook downgrades, offer warnings, offer credit warnings; we see the cost of our money and borrowing going up. We're seeing a tremendous amount of pressure because we have a deteriorating balance sheet, yet the government continues to go on a spending spree.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further comments and questions?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Yesterday, I rose in my two minutes and talked about what's not in the throne speech, as well as talking about that there is no allocation of funds and a firm commitment to year-round GO train service to Niagara Falls. One of my colleagues on the other side, from the Liberals, decided to heckle or make some comments—the MPP from St. Catharines—about GO trains. I want to be clear that I had raised that issue with the member from St. Catharines. He also knows the importance of having GO train service come all the way to Niagara. So I want to make sure that when I stand up in the House and I'm talking about issues that are important to Niagara, I talk to the other MPPs who are elected in my area, because I think that's important. As we go through this process over the next four years, we've been hearing about the partnership and how you want to listen to the other parties. Well, that's why I go and talk to the other MPPs. I think it's important to know.

Make no mistake about it: We have the highest unemployment in Ontario, in Niagara. There is absolutely no reason for it. What we have in Niagara—with the falls, where you get 11 to 12 million visitors a year;

where you have the wine industry, which is growing; and you have the research and development, which could grow—but the big thing, the game-changer for Niagara, is a GO train to Niagara. I want to say that there's no mention of that in the throne speech.

Then when you take a look at Fort Erie, I mentioned the racetrack because there's no mention of support for the horse racing industry or the Horse Racing Partnership Plan, which came into effect. It's important—

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Where have you been?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Where have I been? I can tell you all about the racetrack. There are 37 dates at the Fort Erie Race Track. They've got four and five horses running in races instead of eight, nine or 10—to protect 1,000 jobs there. Bring the slots back there. Protect the 1,000 jobs; 250 more jobs will do more to stimulate—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much.

Further questions and comments? The member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to see you in the chair.

It's a pleasure to respond to the member from Timmins-James Bay. I am really very thankful that he didn't—I can't remember him uttering the words "Trojan Horse," which are, of course, his leader's new—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I did yesterday.

Mr. John Fraser: Yesterday? I'm sorry I missed it. I'm not as happy about it anymore now that you've reminded me of that, but that's now his latest excuse for voting against—or, I anticipate, voting against—what some describe outside of this building as the most progressive budget that has been put forward in this Legislature in years.

I know he was talking about power and the affordability of power. There are measures inside that budget for affordability for low- and middle-income Ontarians for hydro.

The member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke: I really appreciated your Bible lesson yesterday. I wanted to remind you of that seven-year period between 1995 and 2002 when you borrowed money for a tax cut and then hid a \$5.6-billion deficit. There are seven years that you should remember.

I'm sorry that the member from Nipissing is gone right now, but I really enjoyed him schooling the new member from Ottawa-Orléans yesterday on her comparison with the federal government. When I listened to him this morning, he described our budget deficit going up by about \$1.1 billion. Unfortunately, he forgot to mention the Parliamentary Budget Officer stating quite clearly that the federal government is shortchanging Ontario by \$1.2 billion. I'm sure that he's saving his advocacy on behalf of Ontarians to the federal government for some time in the future. We're not quite sure when.

I would like to say as well that the member from Kingston and the Islands gave a great maiden speech yesterday, and I wanted to point that out.

Thank you very much for your time, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I would only just say this: First of all, thanks to all the members for commenting on my eight minutes this morning. I would just say that time will prove or tell just how progressive this government really is. I tend to bet that now that they're able to hide behind the four-and-a-half-year mandate—because that's what essentially this is—they are going to be not as progressive as they put themselves out to be in the last election.

They're going to be faced with an issue of: How do you deal with diminishing revenue in the province of Ontario and increasing costs? At one point, governments have to deal with that. I don't care if you're a government to the left or a government to the right; you have to be able to deal with those issues if you want to be around here and be able to offer services like health care, education and others in a public system the way that Ontarians, I believe, want.

0920

The other thing is that I would just say this, and I guess I'm not surprised but I'm a little bit—only surprised in the sense of how early it comes. I listened to the exchange when the member from Niagara—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Niagara Falls.

Mr. Gilles Bisson:—Niagara Falls talked about horse racing. The comment coming back was, “Do you want a sustainable industry?” Well, listen, there was a sustainable industry before. There was a deal that was made, and people need to recognize this. When we decided to create casinos in this province, it affected horse racing. We made a deal—and it was eventually done by the Tories, who put it in place—in order to put slots at race-tracks as a means to be able to shore up that industry so that it could stay there and keep on employing the people that it did.

There was not one of them that was losing money. For the government all of a sudden to say that this thing was not sustainable and they were justified in taking the \$500 million out, which only about half of that went to horse racing, my God, I think shows to what degree this government has really missed the mark on this particular one. I support the comments made by my colleague from Niagara Falls because I think this is a bad day for horse racing in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: A point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Point of order.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. I know you're new to the chair, and you're doing a good job. A few minutes ago, my friend from Ottawa South said that the member from Nipissing is gone. I believe that's a violation of our parliamentary procedure—to point out if somebody is in the chamber or not. I'd like a ruling, please.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member. It is a point of order that it's not parliamentary to refer to anyone who is not here. Thank you.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The member should withdraw.

Mr. John Fraser: I withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member withdraws? Thank you. Withdrawn.

Further debate? The member from Barrie.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Good morning. First, let me say congratulations, Speaker, on your re-election. You once again have been entrusted by this Legislature with a very important and, as I observed yesterday, difficult job. I'm confident that you will keep order and rule with a firm hand in the same manner that a teacher such as myself might do in the classroom. If this task becomes too difficult, perhaps you might consider implementing some other methods used by teachers in pioneer days. There were no shenanigans in those classrooms.

Before I speak about the community, Barrie, that I represent, I would like to thank some of the people who helped me stand up for my community. In case you didn't know, I'm a late bloomer, so to speak. In fact, I did not become a Liberal candidate in Barrie until almost one week into the writ. I was moved to act when the former Leader of the Opposition announced his plan to eliminate 100,000 public sector jobs. Quite ironically, the announcement was made at the Barrie Country Club.

As a teacher in Barrie, I lived through the turmoil caused by reckless cuts in the 1990s. I did not want services to be negatively affected again, especially for the little kindergarteners in my care. I proudly put my name forward and became part of Team Wynne, and I'm glad I did—part of a team with a positive vision for government and a practical plan. No other group had a plan. And I'm proud today to make my maiden speech before this House and stand in support of our government's throne speech in which this positive, practical plan is articulated.

I want to thank my wonderful campaign manager, Christine Allenby, who took a green candidate with an even less organized support system and turned us into an unstoppable force. My main canvassing team, which went out three times a day, consisted of three boys in their 70s and two retired women. Many thanks to Nelson Theriault, Stan McGrath, John Gilbride, Linda Nicholson and “Mighty Mouse” Jeanie Harris. Thanks also to former MPP Aileen Carroll and her husband Kevin, Jeff Kovalik-Plouffe, Ian Pattillo, Dave Hein, Dorothy Ramsay, Janet Bigham, Heather Owen, Bud Watson and BPLA president Stephen Bertelsen. Thanks also to my family: my two daughters, Kelly and Stacey, and my grandchildren, Christopher and Carling, and to the hundreds of other supporters too numerous to mention. Without all of these volunteers, I would not be here today.

But those who deserve my deepest gratitude are the voters in Barrie, who have placed their trust in me. I will not let them down. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. They made it clear that I am to support the government in implementing the plan outlined in the throne

speech. They told me, as I went to their doors, that they wanted full-day kindergarten to remain in place. It saves them money and gives their children a head start in the education system. New voters and their parents appreciate the 30% rebate on their tuition costs and want that program to remain in place as well.

Many Barrie voters commute to the GTA for their work and use the GO trains and buses. They are appreciative of the work that this government has done reviving this system, but they want all-day, everyday service so commuting can take less time out of their day, giving them more very important time with family and friends.

The corporation of the city of Barrie received millions of dollars for additional police officers, Barrie transit, landfill, arena upgrades, roads, bridges and \$12 million for a new water treatment plant. It's part of this government's uploading of costs, an approach that benefited Barrie taxpayers by \$11 million last year alone. The annual benefit will be over \$17 million by the time the uploading is completed in 2018. Other capital projects included one third of the cost of returning GO Transit to Barrie, a new fire station and the expansion of the Lake Simcoe airport.

Investments to local education included lower class sizes, higher graduation rates, full-day kindergarten and additions at three Barrie secondary schools and funding two new buildings at Georgian College.

As a kindergarten teacher at Terry Fox Elementary School in Barrie, I have personally witnessed the benefits of the programs currently in place because of government funding. Students who may come from homes without having eaten because of their hectic schedule in the mornings or because there is no money to have food in the house for breakfast, or just because they are growing quickly and need more food than was in their lunch boxes that day, are able to get nutritious food whenever they need it throughout the day, no questions asked. Students who have full stomachs are much more able to learn than those who are hungry.

I have also been fortunate to be part of implementing full-day kindergarten, and I wasn't too much of a believer at first. I truly am a believer now. This program will be implemented in all schools across the province this fall. It not only saves young families thousands of dollars in daycare costs and allows both parents to be part of the workforce, it better prepares our young children for their future academic life. They learn more quickly. Little Peyton was three and a half when she entered my JK class last September. She had not yet learned to read or write. As a result of this new program, she will be heading into senior kindergarten socially and academically ahead of where she would have been in the old program. Peyton and her classmates have progressed much more quickly than they would have before, where there were times that I didn't see them for a whole week. They are well prepared. They are almost ready for grade 1, and still have senior kindergarten to go. They are all reading and writing already.

I was also thrilled to see little people with very problematic teeth issues get them fixed because of govern-

ment funding. A member yesterday said that that promise had not been implemented. Very clearly, for the last three years I have seen evidence of it in all the kindergarten classes in our school and in all areas.

0930

After many years of uncertainty, Barrie's boundary issue with the town of Innisfil was resolved, and the city of Barrie is able to move forward with their expansion.

Job creation is a big part of the growth plan for the Simcoe area, aided by a continued increase in GO train service. The number of trains and the number of cars for weekday service have continually increased and we have seen the introduction of weekend and summer GO train service. We hope that eventually people from Toronto will come to Barrie, step off at the station at Allandale, walk across the street to the beach and enjoy Barrie's facilities.

Not to be forgotten from the list are the cleanup of Lake Simcoe, capital and operating funds for local non-profit agencies, social housing, affordable housing, literacy, theatre and other cultural events.

In addition to increases in funding for the rent bank and other housing initiatives, in March 2011, former MPP Carroll announced the official opening of 125 Bayfield Street in Barrie, a 43-unit building which received more than \$3 million from the Canada-Ontario affordable housing program for the construction of new housing units for seniors and people with disabilities. Almost \$4 million was provided through the same program for the construction of 31 new housing units at Stanley Heights, another affordable housing project for seniors in Barrie. It's right beside my school, and those seniors come over and volunteer every day. It's wonderful.

Unprecedented investments were made to local health care, too, with well over \$300 million to RVH for the construction of the new cancer centre and renovations. Millions more were given to reduce wait times and for other projects at our hospital, like a portable radiation unit and \$2.5 million in start-up funding for the family medicine teaching unit. RVH has received over 40% in increased base funding since 2003, and that was a Liberal government.

Other health initiatives included a new long-term-care home for Barrie, the introduction of nurse-practitioner-led clinics and the Aging at Home program. We now have more nurses, and more people have access to front-of-the-line health care services. Former MPP Aileen Carroll worked very hard on securing funds for a hospice in Barrie and she was pleased to announce almost \$3 million, half the cost in capital funding, to build Hospice Simcoe. Doors opened in 2009, and since then, well over 1,000 residents have received care and comfort from our dedicated health care professionals in a home-like setting. This is what we want for our seniors. In their final days at our 10-bed residence, they were very comfortable when they passed away.

Our community programs like Visiting Hospice and grief and bereavement support reach hundreds more each year. Although Barrie already has a hospice, the present

government, our government, should work towards increasing the number of hospices in Ontario. Hospice palliative care is a good thing to do. Many more ridings want and need it. It's something we should all work towards, and it lessens the burden and the costs on hospital facilities.

In 2007, \$2.5 million was announced for start-up of the family medicine teaching unit, which is located at Rotary House in the RVH site. In partnership with RVH and the U of T, the Barrie teaching unit is where residents manage their own practice of up to 300 patients each. The number of resident doctors has increased each year. There were 18 in 2012. Fortunately, many of these doctors love it in Barrie, and on leaving the residency program have stayed in Barrie as family physicians, alleviating the doctor shortage for families.

My personal experiences with the health care system in 2000, during another government, were not that unusual at the time. I got a diagnosis that no family wants to get. I had breast cancer. At that time, patients could get their chemotherapy at Royal Victoria hospital in Barrie, but most patients had to travel far away to get radiation therapy, to North Bay or maybe Buffalo. This type of diagnosis is frightening enough without being told that you have to leave the support and comfort of your family to be treated for your illness in another location, maybe even another country.

One young woman I met had no support system to look after her young toddler, so she made the tough decision to have a double mastectomy so she could stay in Barrie. What a terrible choice she had to make. That no longer has to happen because of the Liberal government.

Now, because of the Liberal government, funding for all treatment can be done in Barrie in the Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre and the cancer care clinic. No question, Barrie is absolutely better off as a result of having a Liberal government at Queen's Park.

As a partner with this government, Barrie will continue to grow and thrive as we take the next steps in building our community and expanding opportunity for all.

This is how Barrie has grown: Ours is a history of building up this province. Barrie's beginnings can be traced back to the First Nations people, using the western shores of Kempenfelt Bay as a place of rest before travelling the portage that ran between Lake Simcoe and the Nottawasaga River to Lake Huron.

The War of 1812 resulted in increased use, allowing the British troops and supplies to bypass the American forces at Detroit. At the war's end, settlers arrived and took up residence at the end of the portage, beginning the traces of modern-day Barrie. The British military presence is reflected in many street names and even in the name of our city itself, in honour of British admiral Sir Robert Barrie.

As our city grew, it began to export local resources. Trees nearly 200 feet tall were logged and shipped out, serving as masts for British ships and railroad ties. In the winter months, huge blocks of ice were cut from the

frozen waters of Kempenfelt Bay and shipped down to Toronto, Buffalo and New York for refrigeration purposes. Three large storage houses enabled the blocks to be effectively stored for shipment during the summer months.

Between the late 1800s and the early 20th century, Barrie underwent a number of changes that contributed to its rapid growth. The long-anticipated railroad connection in 1865 joined Barrie to the city of York, its resources and industry, a connection that is maintained now. But it was the building of Highway 400 in 1950, providing tourists easy access and exposure to our beautiful city by the bay, that made Barrie the favourite for family fun in central Ontario.

Today Barrie's population stands at more than 140,000 and continues to be one of Canada's fastest growing cities. Remembering our heritage and what led to our city's success is the focus of some of our key attractions.

This is what the plan laid out in this throne speech will do, not just for Barrie but for all of Ontario's communities, and that is why I will vote in support of it.

Finally, I would like to congratulate every one of the 107 members of this House on their recent election. Politics is a blood sport and it's a very difficult time, and we all worked hard. Congratulations to those who are here and those who did not make it. I look forward to working with all of you to build Ontario up.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I am pleased today to rise and share comments on the comments that we had heard from the member from Barrie. I really appreciate the zest and the enthusiasm which was so evident when she spoke about her home riding. But I'm afraid that that zest and enthusiasm may very well be squelched when the reality and the severity of the last decade of total mismanagement comes home to roost.

Interjection.

0940

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: My fellow member just said there is maybe too much Kool-Aid over in that caucus.

But the reality is, this Liberal government actually is going to reap what it sowed, and I look forward to seeing how they're going to manage the absolutely mismanaged mess that they created over the last decade.

Just one of the messes that I want to refer to quickly came to mind when the responses were being shared with the member from Timmins-James Bay and the whole topic of the horse racing industry came up. The member from Perth-Wellington shared something with me yesterday. He had the honour of attending the Queen's Plate, and the buzz around that prestigious horse race is that in two or three short years, this Liberal government may have very well killed the root and the foundation of that thoroughbred race because only purebred horses—

Interjections.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Purebred Canadian horses are the only type of horses that are allowed to race, and

our breeding program has gone south, literally and figuratively. So there's a concern there.

But I want to go back to the throne speech as well, Mr. Speaker, because there's little evidence of sound fiscal planning or even evidence-based solutions, and it appears to be a study in contradictions. For instance, they talk about eliminating the deficit, but they don't talk about cutting spending, and that's the root problem of this total mismanaged mess.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further comments and questions? The member for Manitoulin—sorry, Algoma-Manitoulin.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Good; I thought I had a new riding there, including Manitoba. My riding is big enough, thank you very much.

To the member from Barrie, bienvenue. I hope you enjoy the work that you're going to do here. I was really impressed by your family. I'm pleased to know a little bit more about you. I look forward to building bridges with you, particularly with one of the issues you brought up, which was respite care. I'm one of the firm believers in that area, where this province lacks. The biggest city in my riding is Elliot Lake. There's a huge, huge need, and you see the care and the attention that is given in those particular areas.

One of the things that I really enjoyed from your comments is that you really focused on Barrie, what it means to you and the things that are working for you in your riding. That's really important. It's what is going to get you re-elected, to be quite honest with you.

I don't agree with one of your comments where you said that politics is a blood sport. I think that's a perception that's out of this House that we have to change. You as a new member and me, there are different ways that we can change things in here, and that's through our decorum and how we are addressing each other. I'm hopeful. We're all back here at Queen's Park. I hear the battering that's going back and forth in the House. Hopefully that will tone down in a bit, because I think that's what we want to do: build bridges in order to get things accomplished for us.

I have to tell you that things aren't so great in the north. As critic for northern development and mines—and I'm sure you heard it, too: the problems that everyday families are faced with. One of them is the challenging task of everyday living costs. People are struggling to make ends meet. The cost of hydro is not actually being addressed. What I would suggest as well is, learn some of the suggestions that we had made and that we had campaigned on, just like we learned some of the suggestions you had made and that you campaigned on, and let's find the grounds where we can actually meet together and implement changes that will help all Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Mike Colle: Certainly, I've heard a number of maiden speeches over the years that I've been here, but this is one of the very most compelling ones I've heard.

She talked about the personal health challenge that she had, and she relayed it to this place and how it's our job to make sure that, when people can't get cancer care in their home, we do the best we can to make sure that places like Barrie do get that care so mothers don't have to leave home to get treatment in North Bay when they leave children behind. That's a very, very significant and compelling story our new member from Barrie told us.

Also, as the member from Algoma-Manitoulin said, she talked about her hometown, Barrie. Too seldom in this place—I see people stand up and attack the government or praise the government. They don't talk about the people back home. She boosted the people back home. Sometimes too many people stand up here and are always talking about high unemployment: "Things are bad." Barrie is a beautiful place by the bay. It's got an incredible work ethic. It's one of these cities that a lot of you represent here that doesn't get the attention it deserves: Barrie—124,000 people, almost the same size as Prince Edward Island. People are working around the clock; they're building; they're driving to work every day; they're building new schools and hospitals. It's an incredible working community that deserves a lot more credit. The member from Barrie is here to do that. She was relating to the importance of that child in full-day kindergarten who is now benefiting from what we do here.

I think this member really hit home what's very important, and that is that everything we do relates to the people back home. We should be praising the people back home and the incredible history that the people have made back home. So let's talk about what's good at home, not what's bad.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure to comment on the speech today by the new member from Barrie. I want to congratulate her for being elected and thank her for making that decision. I'm sure we'll hear more of her contributions to this House in days to come.

I want to talk about the throne speech. I can't comment specifically on her speech, because it was very personal and very directed at the riding, but I do want to talk about the throne speech itself and how this government has put itself into quite a box. It's got a tiger by the tail, as they say, because they've preached on one side about how they were going to deliver all of these new programs and new spending for the people of Ontario, enhancing their lives, as they said, to paraphrase what they've been saying. But on the other hand, they know they've got a mess of their own creation in the debt and deficit here in the province of Ontario.

On the one hand they say they are going to be absolutely resolved on dealing with that debt crisis and the deficit in the province of Ontario, but they give us no information, no specifics, on how they're going to do that. They're saying, "Oh, there will be tough decisions." Well, it's about time we started to talk about those tough decisions, because their hand-picked adviser, Don Drum-

mond, has said that they can't get to balance without making some serious changes. They've got to tell us what services they plan to cut here in the province of Ontario. They've got to tell us who's going to get laid off in the province of Ontario, as far as public servants are concerned. We talked about that during the campaign, recognizing that in order to get to balance those tough decisions would have to be made, and we were prepared to make them, but this government wants to dance all around the issue and hope that the tooth fairy shows up sometime before 2017-18—or the fairy godmother—with a bag of money to pay off the deficit. But that's not going to happen. We live in the real world here, and you people have to start managing the government like you're in the real world, not in Walt Disney's *Fantasia*.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the speaker for her final comments.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I'd like to thank everyone for their kind comments. I hope that we're getting along as well in four years. I do believe that we need to work together. I recall that Mr. Obama thought that that's what he would do. It didn't work out so well there. Everyone needs to compromise, and I'm hoping that we will be able to do that in a civilized manner. I know that a lot of teachers do not bring their classes here to witness question period, and there's a reason for it. I hope that we do improve the decorum here, although I did find myself, yesterday afternoon, chirping a little bit. So I apologize for that, and I hope everyone has a wonderful day and a great four years.

I hope we do live up to our promises and we do implement all of the things that we promised for all of the people of Ontario and the people in Barrie. I would like to say that working together is very important. I see my ETFO colleague across the hall there, Jennifer, the member from Oshawa, and I welcome her. This is a different experience for us and a different setting. Quite often, elementary teachers in particular are very quiet and shy. I don't think that's going to happen with us. Thank you again.

0950

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? The member from—Elgin—Middlesex—London.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you, Speaker. Congratulations on your appointment to this position. I think you'll do well, as soon as you learn my riding name.

I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak and respond to the throne speech. We do find ourselves back at Queen's Park with a newly formed Liberal majority government, so congratulations to those who won their elections, and we look forward to working together with you.

Speaker, I do want to get to the point of the matter, and that's about Ontario's fiscal reality. At this time in Ontario's history, it's a very difficult and frightening truth that we have to confront. Unfortunately, this Liberal government, through the past 10 years and now, currently avoids looking at this reality. But a problem doesn't go away just because you ignore it. Just like a pile of dust

and dirt starts to form when you continue to sweep it under the rug, Ontario's debt continues to pile up when you neglect to restrain spending. The biggest problem in this government is that it continues to sweep bigger and bigger piles of dirt under the rug. The projected deficit, according to their spring budget, will be \$12.5 billion for 2014-15. That's an increase of \$1.2 billion over their projected deficit of \$11.3 billion for 2012-13. Our debt level as a percentage of GDP is also set to rise to 40.8% by 2015-16.

To keep things in perspective, when the PCs left office in 2003 the debt level had been reduced to about 28% of GDP. Tough decisions were made by the PC government during the 1990s, but that government left Ontario's fiscal house and capacity to invest in the best shape it has ever been. Unfortunately, for the past 11 years, this government has squandered billions of dollars and has put us in the deepest hole in Ontario's history.

While we tried to bring this message to the voters this spring, it was overshadowed not only by a myriad of cheap promises from the Liberals but also an avalanche of third party ads produced by groups that had vested interests in the Liberals being re-elected.

Just as a side note for all Ontarians watching here today who may have become sick and tired with the ubiquity of negative ads during the election, please don't forget that it was the PC Party that put forward a bill in the last session to reduce third party advertising. As was expected, the Liberals voted against this legislation, despite the fact that every other province in the country has some form of third party advertising legislation. Nevertheless, I was disappointed by the results of the election on our party. The establishment of a majority government, regardless of whichever party, does present a number of valuable opportunities going forward.

As I mentioned, our province is facing a severe debt and deficit crisis. However, if the Liberals wanted to, they could, as a majority government, decide to unilaterally bring down spending—put spending controls in place. It's not a very easy process and requires political will and fortitude, but with a majority government, at least the Liberals would not have to worry about having their major initiatives voted down.

In the days after June 12, I tried to assure myself that there would be a possibility—a little possibility—that firm action would be taken to bring our province back from the fiscal brink. Without the constraints of a minority government, it was my hope that even this Liberal government couldn't deny how bad Ontario's fiscal reality truly is. They couldn't deny that Ontario resembles Greece 15 years ago. They couldn't deny that our debt burden is worse than California's. By acknowledging this reality, I had hoped that even the Liberal government would step up and make the tough decisions to rein in spending to eliminate our deficit and start to reduce our debt.

However, last week's throne speech dashed all of my hopes. It set forward an agenda that is virtually the same as the old one, and that's to say that it's the same agenda

that in 10 years doubled a debt level that had taken 100 years to accrue. There's really no surprise from the throne speech that this government will now be eager to reintroduce its spring budget. The throne speech was certainly written with that in mind. And so Ontario will get to again see a budget that hikes taxes, increases spending and creates more job-killing policies while future generations get saddled with more and more debt. It may be interesting to note that the hour we spent in the chamber during the throne speech cost the people of Ontario an additional \$1.34 million in debt. That's how much our debt increases each hour, \$1.34 million. I truly can't believe how blind this government is to face the reality. Even when news articles after news articles from publications ranging from the Toronto Star to the Huffington Post warn this government of the perils of continuing to overspend, Premier Wynne and her team remain steadfastly committed to building a bigger debt pile. While pundits and investors cower in fear at the house of cards that is Ontario, this government continues to operate without a care in the world. Perhaps they don't understand the consequences.

So as a member of this Legislature, it is my duty to take the time that I have here today to outline the looming negative consequences that face Ontario under the vision outlined in the throne speech. It would be my hope that these Liberals finally start to take more seriously the fiscal situation of this province—

Interjections.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: But I'm getting the impression, and I'm hearing it now, too many promises were made during the election to too many special interests. Certainly, if the government is serious about making the decisions necessary to eliminate our deficit, they will no doubt alienate some of their biggest special interest supporters.

Perhaps the biggest sign of Ontario's financial distress came on the same day the Lieutenant Governor delivered the Liberals' throne speech. As we all know Moody's Investors Service has lowered the outlook for Ontario's debt from stable to negative. While this isn't actually a downgrade, it is an indication that Moody's is prepared to downgrade Ontario's debt unless significant action is taken to balance the budget.

It's great that some of the Liberals came out and said that they're committed to balancing the budget by 2017-18. However, it's the job of the analysts at Moody's to dig deeper and look below the surface to verify whether in fact the actions and directions set out by this government credibly support their deficit reduction target. I tell you right now, I'm not a financial expert and it's not that difficult to see why Moody's affirmed what the PC Party has been saying all along. By referring to the Liberal budget as a credit-negative budget, Moody's is telling the Ontario people that the budget that triggered the election, the same budget that will be introduced next week, does not contain the measures necessary to instill confidence in Ontario's debt.

While the Liberals say that they will balance the budget by 2017-18, Moody's has noticed that most of the

heavy lifting in terms of spending restraint will occur in the back end of the plan. In other words, the Liberals are saying, "Let's not worry about doing any heavy lifting today. Let's worry about it tomorrow."

But what concerns us in the PC caucus and what concerns the analysts at Moody's is that the approach is fundamentally risky. Circumstances can change, and to be honest the Liberals have not been good at sticking to their plan. Their most recent budget revised the projected deficits of 2014-15 and 2015-16 upward by about \$1.5 billion and \$2.5 billion respectively. That is to say, last year's plan, which also committed to balancing the budget by 2017-18, projected deficits of \$10.8 billion and \$5.1 billion in 2014-15 and 2015-16 respectively. However, this year those projected deficits are now \$12.5 billion and \$7.6 billion.

So it's great for the Liberals to say that they will have balanced the budget by 2017-18, but if every year they keep revising their deficit projections up and up, it becomes mathematically impossible to balance the budget.

Another concern we share with Moody's is that the road to balance as laid out by the Liberals relies heavily on a surge in Ontario's economy. I've always been of the opinion that most prudent plans attempt to take action on things you can control. Doing so reduces the risk other factors have that may derail your plan. Unfortunately, Liberals are heavily relying on the health of Ontario's economy to achieve balance. Again, circumstances can change.

Everyone predicted that Ontario would rebound faster than it has. However, as we've all seen in the past few years, the economy can be fickle and it's been particularly slow to rebound following 2008. Therefore to pin Ontario's fiscal strategy primarily on this factor is imprudent, particularly when we so clearly have a spending problem. Maybe that's part of the problem.

The government has conditioned itself to think that spending is not the issue. I hear them say it in every press conference where they get asked about spending restraint. I also hear them blame the recession for Ontario's fiscal woes. All of these tactics amount to abdication of responsibility by the government for the mess that it is in and the mess that it alone created. I'll go on and prove that as I continue.

If we consider the last budget of the Ernie Eves government, we can note that Ontario's revenues were \$66.5 billion and expenditures were \$54.3 billion. In the most recent Wynne budget, revenues are \$118.9 billion and expenditures are \$130.4 billion. For those sitting across the aisle who still think revenue is an issue, just consider the fact that over that 11-year period, revenues have increased by 79%. On an average, compounded-yearly basis, this is about 7% a year—7%. That has been consistently higher than inflation. It has been consistently higher than the real GDP growth, and has been consistently higher than most other provinces.

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The only thing that the growth rate hasn't been higher than is the growth rate in expenditures. Over the same

period of time, expenditures have increased by 140%, or roughly 13% on an annualized basis. Expenditure growth in Ontario has nearly doubled that of revenues on a yearly basis. Just once I'd like to see a member of the government stand here and tell me that they've spent too much, because quite simply they have.

One more thing to reinforce the fact that our problem is a spending problem and not a shortfall of revenues is that our personal tax rate is the third-highest in the country. Only Nova Scotia and Quebec have marginal tax rates that are higher than Ontario's. Why does this matter? It matters because once people, investors, companies and countries lose confidence in Ontario's debt, our interest rates will rise. Interest already costs the taxpayers \$11 billion per year. That's almost 10 cents of every dollar the Ontario people pay in taxes to the government goes to paying the interest on our outstanding debt. That's \$11 billion that is not going to our schools, our hospitals or improving our roads. And the frightening thing is interest rates will become a larger portion of the budget going forward.

According to the budget plan, the Liberals intend to restrain spending. They anticipate total expenditures will increase by 1% less than GDP over the next few years. This means that according to the Ministry of Finance's own numbers, the justice budget will increase an average of 1% each year; children's and social services will increase at just under 4% each year; post-secondary and training will increase at 1% each year; and both education and health care will increase an average of 2% each year. The total we pay in interest on our debt will increase at a staggering 8% each year—8%.

In order to balance all these increases, there is a big "other" section in the Ontario budget that calls for yearly decreases of about 6%. But what falls under that category? I don't know, which is the problem, because it makes the entire spending restraint part of the Liberal plan uncertain and abstract. It's no wonder Moody's has revised its outlook on our debt.

What was interesting to note was that while Wynne supporters rallied in support around her on the evening of June 12, investors and traders were also responding to Wynne's victory. The Friday morning after the election, investors responded to the news of Kathleen Wynne's election as Premier and that the Ontario budget would go forward as a result. Their message was loud and clear: By 10:20 a.m., the yield on Ontario's long-term bonds jumped two basis points, the biggest one-day jump since January. What does that mean exactly? Well, interest rates and bond prices are inversely related. When the price of a bond goes down, the interest rates go up. The reason is prices go down because people don't want the bonds and therefore the interest that's offered on these bonds has to rise to entice more buyers. In short, the morning after Premier Wynne won the election, investors from all over the world were trying to get rid of bonds like they were infected. With more people selling than buying, the interest rate yield went up.

The head of the Canadian fixed-income division at BlackRock, the world's biggest money manager, says:

"We're on high alert that S&P will downgrade Ontario.... She's front-loading the deficit or the total debt in anticipation future years will benefit from stronger growth." The S&P is "just looking at the raw numbers and they're seeing a deteriorating financial balance sheet."

Translation: S&P could downgrade Ontario's debt very soon. This will mean Ontarians will have more of their hard-earned tax dollars going to pay interest rates that will get higher and higher every year. This will mean less money every year that can be invested in health care, education, infrastructure, the environment and agriculture. And let's not forget that this Liberal government has brought us to this point, and it's the Liberal government that, with their throne speech, is refusing to get us out.

I'd like to talk a little bit now about job creation. As I've discussed, the Liberal budget relies heavily on strengthening Ontario's economy to achieve a balance. However, the throne speech offered nothing in the ways of credible job creation policies. In fact, one of the pillars of the plan is the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, which is not only not a job creator, it is a flat-out job killer. Regardless of how Wynne dresses it up, we all know this pension amounts to a payroll tax. Every business in Ontario will be required to contribute 1.9% of earnings for every employee who makes less than \$90,000.

Let's assume you have a factory or business that employs 100 people at about \$50,000 per person, and that's about the size of any mid-size factory. That means that under the Ontario pension plan, the business will have to pay an additional \$100,000 in expenses—\$100,000 extra. I don't know about the rest of you, but I think that's a lot of money.

What scares me about this is that, in my riding, I have seen 6,300 good manufacturing jobs erased since 2008. While the recession certainly played a factor, many of these companies like Ford are still making cars; it's just that they've determined it's not worth making cars in our part of Ontario. Now you're telling the businesses that stuck it out through the depths of the recession and had faith enough to keep their factories in Ontario that their reward is a \$100,000 yearly expense, courtesy of the Ontario government. I can't think of anything more asinine or detrimental to job creation than that.

What really troubles me was when I read comments delivered by the CEO of Magna during their annual general meeting. First of all, we have to appreciate that Magna has a storied history in Ontario. Its culture and roots are embedded here. That makes it different from other foreign-owned companies that have less of a vested interest in Ontario. Foreign companies may come and go on occasion, but Magna derives much of its identity from being in Ontario.

And I can understand why: There's a Magna plant in my riding. It does advanced manufacturing, employs my neighbours and provides a decent living for hundreds of people in St. Thomas. So it troubles me when I heard the Magna CEO state that Magna would no longer be investing in Ontario. It's not closing any plants at this point, but any benefits of expanding in Ontario are outweighed

by the costs. The reason the costs outweigh the benefits, according to Magna, are high energy rates and the proposed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, which would cost Magna \$35 million a year.

This decision by the company is not rooted in broader economic malaise; it's directly related to policies enacted by this government. Their own bureaucrats warned them that the Ontario pension plan would drive over 100,000 jobs out of the province.

Obviously, it's too early to have lost that many jobs already, but Magna's position is certainly an indictment of the plan and a dark omen of the future that awaits Ontario. When I look at how consistently misguided this Liberal government is when it comes to fiscal and economic policy, sometimes I think they will not be happy until all the manufacturing jobs in Ontario are eliminated.

The bottom line is that the Liberals have a four-year mandate. We in the PC caucus will continue to sound the alarm, and hopefully this government will take the decisive action that's needed to avert a full fiscal disaster. We in the PC Party believe in the services that this government provides, but we also need, at the same time, to be fiscally prudent so that these services may continue: to provide the health care for our seniors, to provide protection in the environment and to ensure that we have infrastructure. All of these are on the line when this government continues to spend and spend, and our debt levels continue to rise.

It's like running a household, Mr. Speaker: You can only run the credit card so far before things start having to be cut away. This government has run that far. It's time to take a look at their policies. It's time to bring forth the policy in this upcoming budget—there's still time to change it—to ensure that fiscal restraint is in order and that we can protect future generations like my daughter, our kids, our grandkids down the road, so that they are not saddled with this debt, so that they can have a health care and an education system much like we were allowed to have during the Bill Davis years when we were growing up.

So I'm hoping this government steps forward, starts listening to the PC Party caucus and implements some of these restraints so that, going forward, we'll have a stronger and more prosperous Ontario.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Seeing as it is close to 10:15 and that if we were to start questions and comments, we would have to finish it all, this House is now recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1009 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's my pleasure to welcome Heather de Veber and Gabriel de Veber to this chamber. I hope you will all join me in welcoming them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister of—
Hon. Deborah Matthews: The Treasury Board.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): President of Treasury Board.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you, Speaker. I'm delighted to welcome two summer interns: Cecily MacKnight and Priya Kanagakingam. Welcome.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's my pleasure to welcome, from the Ontario Health Coalition, Peterborough chapter, Dave Nicholl, Tom Young, Roy Brady, Dorothy Body and Carol Winter. And my mother, Sheila Wood, is here to lobby me as well today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A tough lobby.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's my pleasure to introduce Andrea Houston, a journalist known to many of us in the House. Welcome, Andrea.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further introductions? Further introductions? Last call for further introductions.

It is now time for question period. The leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Sorry, I forgot something. I apologize to the leader.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would ask members to join me in welcoming our new pages. If they could assemble, please.

While the rest of the assembly takes place, it has been suggested that sometimes we miss hearing each riding's name because of applause, so if we could hold our applause until all of our pages are introduced, that would be helpful.

I would ask the members to join us in welcoming the legislative pages serving in the first session of the 41st Parliament:

Ashley Bowes from Oshawa; Caitlin Boyle from Brampton West; Thomas Brassard from Thunder Bay—Atikokan; Gabriel Chemla from Etobicoke—Lakeshore; Hayden Cheung from Richmond Hill; Kaitlyn Doleweerd from Simcoe North; Ethan Elliott from Perth—Wellington; Lavanya Gunentherathas from Scarborough Centre; Emmanuelle Hébert from Mississauga South; Daniel Hoogsteen from Burlington; Émilie Lebel from Timmins—James Bay; Matthew Lynn from Etobicoke Centre; Ayesha Mir from Don Valley East; Zahra Mohamed from Markham—Unionville; William Qin from Mississauga—Brampton South; Victoria Recagno from Oakville; Nardien Sedhom from Mississauga—Streetsville; Brendan Sheppard from Barrie; Stephanie Tfofas from Scarborough—Guildwood; Josée Venne Brisebois from Sudbury; Ethan Walker from Wellington—Halton Hills; Eric Wood from Davenport; and David Zhou from Scarborough—Agincourt.

These are our pages for this session.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Again, I apologize to the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition for that interruption.

It is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Jim Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly the introduction of pages is important. It's historic for them to be here, and we certainly welcome them all.

Now let's get down to business.

My question is for the Premier. Moody's credit rating agency has changed Ontario's debt rating outlook from stable to negative. After 11 years of a Liberal regime in Ontario, you've managed to double our debt, and paying the interest on that debt is now the third-largest expenditure in the budget. When referencing the debt, even former Liberal MPP Donna Cansfield said, "This province is in deep trouble."

Premier, your proposed budget has caused a credit downgrade to hang over Ontario. Tell us today, does the government's fiscal plan take into account a further credit rating downgrade, which would increase the cost of servicing the debt? Or will you assure us that your budget will not result in a credit downgrade?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What I can assure the Leader of the Opposition is that we are determined to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18. We have laid that out in our budget. We will reintroduce our budget next week. We have been very, very clear about the constraints that we know have to be put in place. We have been clear about that path to balance.

But we've also been clear—and we were clear with the people of Ontario as we went through the election campaign—that our plan was based on investments in communities, investments in the talent and skills of our people, our children, our grandchildren, investments in infrastructure that we know are necessary, whether it's roads or bridges, whether it's transit, whether it's hospitals or schools. Those investments are necessary in order for the province to thrive.

That is the basis of our plan, and it is laid out very clearly in our budget documents.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Again to the Premier: Premier, you claim that you want to build Ontario up, but the fact is, the massive debt your government has created is now threatening front-line services that we cherish here in Ontario, like health care and education. Even former Finance Minister Dwight Duncan says that the province's finances are "a ticking time bomb," yet you're still working to push through a budget that the credit rating agencies are already frowning upon.

Premier, is it your intention to rush through this budget, then shut down the Legislature so that you can

negotiate new public sector contracts without the Legislature being in session to hold you to account?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As the Leader of the Opposition knows, we are back here within 20 days because I said that it was important that we get the budget reintroduced and that we have the opportunity to debate it. We're willing to stay as long as that takes, to have the budget debated and to make sure that we get the full input from this House.

But the reality that the Leader of the Opposition puts forward, that there are challenges ahead, that's not news to us. We know that there are challenges, Mr. Speaker. That's why in our budget, we lay out the path to balance. We understand the constraints that have to be in place.

But the other reality is that there are investments needed. I would just call attention to a statement that the member for Wellington—Halton Hills made yesterday in his first member's statement. He talked about the need in his riding—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —and I will quote in the final supplementary, but he talked about the need in his riding for investments in infrastructure.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Well, the honourable member for Halton—

Interjections.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I just say to the Premier, the honourable member for Wellington—Halton Hills has a far better record of sticking up for his constituents and setting priorities, because he was part of a government that set priorities for eight years in this province and balanced the budget.

Premier, in Europe, they—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That will do.

Mr. Jim Wilson: We've seen in Europe, where they didn't care about the credit rating, or didn't care enough about it, and they didn't care enough about their debt obligations—in fact, their debt obligations just kept growing—that they actually did have to cut services that we cherish here in Ontario, like health care and education.

You need to treat the credit rating as sacrosanct to make sure that we spend within our means, because we owe that to the hard-working people of Ontario. That's an obligation we have, and we have an obligation to preserve front-line services.

Premier, will you take your time with the budget? We'll forgive you if you don't introduce it next Monday. Take your time with the budget. Fix it so that we don't lose our current credit rating.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What is sacrosanct to me are the needs of this province and the needs of the people in this province, and those needs are multi-faceted. As the Leader of the Opposition notes, there are challenges

ahead for our fiscal situation, and we have laid out our path to balance in our budget.

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But we also have a need to make investments in infrastructure. The Leader of the Opposition references the history of the member for Wellington–Halton Hills and his participation in the government, his membership in the government, and his membership in a government that in fact didn't make the investments that were needed, didn't make the investments in infrastructure that were needed, which is why yesterday he was standing in this House saying, "On June 13, the day after"—and I'm quoting the member for Wellington–Halton Hills—"On June 13, the day after the election, we were back to work at my constituency office, and I wrote the Premier to highlight three key issues in my riding: the Highway 6 Morriston bypass, improved GO train service, and high-speed Internet in rural Ontario." So, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

New question.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Premier. Good morning, Premier, and congratulations on your success.

Premier, the day after you brought in your budget, Moody's rang the first of many alarm bells. They said that your deficit represented "a credit negative for the province." They said that the path to balance "presents more risk than previously assessed." Premier, this is a clear signal, yet you're bringing back the same budget next week.

We know that your \$12.5-billion deficit has already caused cuts in senior physiotherapy, cuts in cataract surgeries and cuts in diabetes testing strips. Premier, I'll ask you: What cuts are coming next?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, Mr. Speaker, the member for Nipissing is kind of playing both sides of the fence here, because on the one hand he reiterates what his leader has said about concerns about the fiscal situation, on which I have acknowledged that there are challenges. There's absolutely no doubt about that, but we have laid out a path to balance, and we will reintroduce our budget next week. But at the same time he talks about the need for more spending.

The reality is that we have to find ways to meet the needs of the people of this province. The issues that he raised in terms of health care are part of a transformation of the health care system that is absolutely critical. We must provide services in a different way. We must provide more home care and more services in the community. But we must provide those services; we cannot neglect those services. And we must make those investments in infrastructure that we know are needed in the riding of Wellington–Halton Hills and across the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'll certainly let the 34 people at the hospital in North Bay know that they're part of a

transformation. The 60 beds that were closed: I'll let them know that that's part of a transformation.

Premier, even more warning signals from financial experts came the very day after the election. The Financial Post revealed that Ontario's borrowing costs spiked the most in six months. BlackRock, the world's biggest money manager, said that they were on "high alert" for a credit rating downgrade for Ontario and noted that investors were "seeing a deteriorating financial balance sheet." Premier, you're well aware that this will lead to extra borrowing costs, which will take away money from front-line services.

Someone is going to feel the pain of your decisions. Who is it that will suffer next, Premier? Is it families, is it seniors or is it Ontario's most vulnerable?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, there is a fundamental disagreement between the opposition and us. That fundamental disagreement is that we don't believe that starting with cutting 100,000 jobs and slashing services is the way to prosperity for the province. We just don't believe that.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I think that the people who work in the new hospital in North Bay and the people who work in the children's treatment centre in North Bay understand that investment in services is very important. They understand that investment in infrastructure is very important.

We will reintroduce our budget next week, Mr. Speaker. We have laid out a path to balance in that budget. We have laid out the investment strategy that we believe is necessary at this point. We must do both of those if the province is to prosper.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Premier, the rating agency sent a further shot across your bow in an attempt to jolt you back to reality. Moody's has now downgraded their credit outlook from stable to negative based on your plan to forge ahead with this budget. A formal credit rating downgrade is now forecast, which will not only drive up the cost of borrowing for the province but also for linked agencies, such as my city of North Bay, the city of Ottawa, the University of Ottawa, the University of Toronto, the school board financing authority—all will downgrade, along with the province. Rating agencies simply are not buying into this promise to balance in three years. Norman Levine of Portfolio Management stated that you "have not articulated in any way, shape or form" how you would get there.

Premier, can you tell us today specifically what further cuts to front-line services will make your budget balance?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I will just go back to what I said previously, which is that there is a fundamental disagreement. We believe that if we do not make the investments in transit, in roads, in bridges, in schools, in hospitals and in the education of our young people, if we do not make those investments, if we do not provide opportunities for young people to have experience and to

partner with business and get that work experience, if we do not transform the health care system and make sure that we have more home care in communities, if we don't do those things, we believe—in fact, there's good evidence—that we will not have the future that will attract business to the province. We will not create those jobs in the short term and in the longer term. So there is a fundamental disagreement between us and the opposition.

We will reintroduce our budget next week and we look forward to the debate in the Legislature on that plan that will build Ontario up.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The Liberals have put forward a Trojan Horse plan. The government is telling Ontarians that it is progressive, but scratch the surface, Speaker, and you'll find some real surprises there, like the fire sale of public assets. You don't burn the furniture to heat the house.

Will the Premier tell Ontarians what public assets she's planning to sell off?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, as I said yesterday, the leader of the third party's platform was actually based on the plan that we had put forward. It was the foundation of the fiscal plan that she ran on. I think I just need to remind her that the plan that we are going to reintroduce next week is exactly the one on which she based her fiscal plan.

What we have said is that, yes, we are going to make sure that the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario work for the people of Ontario. We have asked Ed Clark, who is the former CEO of the Toronto-Dominion Bank, to look at those assets, to make sure that they are working in the best way possible for the people of Ontario so that we can lay out that path to balance and so that we can make the investments that are necessary for the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: As the Premier knows, our public assets provide benefits to Ontarians. For example, one of OPG's jobs is to provide electricity without adding in the profit margin. Selling off OPG will turn it into another private power company looking to make more money from families and businesses. We know first-hand that privatized power has tripled hydro bills in this province since 2002.

Will the Premier tell Ontarians whether she thinks it's the right thing to sell off OPG so it will turn into yet another private power company driving up their bills for private interests?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The leader of the third party is making a huge leap and I don't know exactly where she's getting her information, but what we have said is that there are assets that are owned by the people of Ontario. I believe that it is responsible for government to make sure that those assets work for the people of Ontario. I used the example of the 407 yesterday. I'm

going to use that example again because I believe that had the government of the day had a process in place to actually look at the 407 and to look at how it could have been made to work for the people of Ontario, I don't think it would have been sold off at the rate that it was sold off and I don't think that the people of Ontario would have then been robbed of that ongoing stream of revenue.

I believe that it is responsible that the government make sure that assets work for the people of the province. That's what we're going to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: In 2013-14, the LCBO put \$1.7 billion into health care, education and other very important public services. That's a long-term, stable source of public funds that come from that agency. Even Mike Harris said that selling the LCBO didn't provide enough "bang for our buck," and Ernie Eves said that selling off an asset that generates so much public revenue simply doesn't make any sense. Does the Premier think it makes sense to sell off the LCBO?

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Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, again, I agree with the leader of the third party. The LCBO is a terrific asset and provides a great benefit to the people of Ontario. The leader of the third party is making a leap of logic that just is not based in any reality. What I've said is that we want to make sure that the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario work to the very optimal value possible for the people of Ontario.

I would ask the leader of the third party, now that she's had some time to contemplate whether she will support the budget that we are bringing in, that we're reintroducing on Monday—because it makes investments in transit, in roads, in bridges, in developmental services, in support for personal support workers and home care, I would ask her whether she is prepared now to support that progressive budget that previously she deemed was not acceptable.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. The Premier told Ontarians that her plan was a rejection of austerity, but yesterday she wouldn't rule out cutting 100,000 public service jobs, and she didn't rule out the fire sale of public assets.

My question is a simple one: Will the Premier come clean with Ontarians and tell them whether or not she will rule out the firing of 100,000 people and the fire sale of public assets?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It's almost breathtaking, because what our budget and our plan does is it lays out supports for personal support workers to make sure that personal support workers, who are fundamental to transforming the health care system, are paid adequately. It lays out raises for child care workers, and the leader of the third party purports to be supportive of child care and

the child care system. It lays out \$810 million in investment in developmental services. That's something that for years we have known is necessary, that there's a gap in our system. People have not had support. People with developmental disabilities, once they age out of school, haven't had the support that they need. We have suggested, and we have put forward in our budget, that we would make investments in those people.

I turn to the leader of the third party and say why won't you—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Be seated, please.

Start the clock. Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the Premier insists she's been upfront with the people of Ontario, but she didn't dispute the comments made by the Liberals' hand-picked economist Don Drummond, who had this to say about the Liberal plan: "By 2017, I wouldn't be at all surprised if that involved the public sector about 100,000 lower."

Now, will the Premier be upfront with Ontarians and tell them whether Don Drummond is right about the Liberal plan?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think that the leader of the third party knows full well that Don Drummond did not suggest that we were going in with a plan to cut 100,000 workers. She knows that. That's not our plan. Again, I would ask the leader of the third party, and I would ask the members who were saying that our plan will not happen—I would ask them for their support—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Essex, come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would ask for their support on top of the things I spoke about earlier: their support for investments in public transit; investments in legal aid support, which is part of our plan; an increased social assistance rate—I would ask for their support for those things.

To the accusation that this will not happen, Mr. Speaker, I am more than determined. We are here sitting in the beginning of July because I am determined to bring back our budget. I am determined to work in this Legislature to get it passed so that we can make those investments in a better Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: New Democrats believe that government should be investing in the concerns facing families, not adding to their concerns. The Premier's plan could see 100,000 people fired and our public assets sold off. Does the Premier think austerity is okay as long as it's splashed with a coat of red paint?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I guess again I would just ask, when the leader of the third party talks about the people about whom she's concerned, does that mean

she's not concerned about personal support workers, she's not concerned about child care workers, she's not concerned about the people who will work to build the transit that we are going to invest in and that she's not concerned about the families who can't get legal aid because they don't have enough support—and our plan would give them more support—is she not concerned about those people? Because my understanding of the NDP is they used to be concerned about those people. We are concerned about those people.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. New question?

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Just weeks before the election, the former Minister of Transportation announced that your government would invest in high-speed rail from London to Toronto with a stop in Kitchener. Of course he didn't—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I'm going to ask the member from Eglinton–Lawrence and the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek to take it outside.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): In case anyone has missed the message, it's not about you two.

Please finish your question.

Mr. Michael Harris: Thanks. The former minister didn't have a realistic cost estimate, he didn't have ridership numbers and his announcement was routinely rejected by experts across the province. Still he stuck to his guns, claiming you'd be delivering.

Minister, we all know that Liberal promises during elections aren't worth the paper that they're written on, so I'd like to give you a chance to set the record straight. Minister, was this high-speed rail promise an actual commitment or was the former minister just selling one of your election points?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to begin by actually welcoming the member from Kitchener–Conestoga back to the Legislature and thanking him for this question today. I also understand that he is the PC caucus's transportation critic, so I look forward to having the chance to work closely with him and all other members on all sides of the House to make sure that we deliver on the plan that the people of Ontario have elected us to do.

That means that for communities like Kitchener and communities right across the province of Ontario, it's crucial that we begin to get on with the work at hand, that we begin to make sure that the \$29 billion that we've earmarked for transit and transportation infrastructure gets rolled out so that communities like Kitchener and communities across this province have the benefits from those investments.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Michael Harris: Back to the minister: Toronto Star transit expert Greg Gormick says your “back-of-the-napkin high-speed rail plan is so out of sync with reality that its failings don’t warrant cataloguing,” and it’s not hard to see why. When the former minister made your high-speed rail commitment, he couldn’t offer any details. He just said that he had a study somewhere which backed up his claims. Although he refused to release the study during the election, he told the media, “One of the first things we want to do if we’re re-elected is get those studies out there.”

Minister, in the spirit of transparency will you release this mystery study, or will you continue to hide it because you know it won’t back up your claims?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member from Kitchener–Conestoga for that supplementary question. It’s important for everyone to understand that we are working very hard to finalize a business case for this particular project.

One of the things that I do want to highlight in my response today is how proud I was to serve alongside the former member from Kitchener Centre, because of his extraordinary advocacy for his community, and how much I’m looking forward to working closely with the new member from Kitchener–Conestoga, who is right here—

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Kitchener Centre.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Sorry, from Kitchener Centre, who I know will continue to be a champion for her community.

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As I said in my initial answer, we are committed on this side of the House to making sure that we implement the \$29 billion worth of crucial public infrastructure, public transit and transportation investments that are needed right across this province. I know the people of Kitchener and people in communities right across Ontario are delighted to know that we want to roll up our sleeves and get back to work to make sure that we deliver positive results for all of Ontario.

HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. First, congratulations on your new appointment. I look forward to working with the minister.

Public health care advocates are at Queen’s Park today to oppose this government’s plan to push even more services out of our hospitals and into private, for-profit clinics. In 2012, the Auditor General found over 800 private health care facilities in Ontario, and 97% of them are for-profit.

This government’s Trojan Horse budget includes a third straight year of hospital budget freezes, which means cuts to hospitals, increased user fees and even more private, for-profit clinics. Can the minister tell Ontarians why his government is so intent on cutting hospital services and expanding private, for-profit clinics in this province?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. I’m happy to talk about the government’s plan to improve the quality of care. I would think the member opposite would also agree that it’s important to provide care to people where they need it, when they need it and as easily as possible.

I want to say that I’m glad as well. I will be speaking with the Ontario Health Coalition in about an hour’s time. They have an important day here. They’re going to be advocating on a number of important issues. But I want to emphasize that we’re only going to move these procedures into not-for-profit clinics. All medically necessary procedures performed in these clinics will be covered by OHIP.

A good example is the Kensington eye clinic, which I suspect the member opposite supports, which here in Toronto has provided cataract surgery—low-risk procedures—to nearly 12,000 patients in Toronto, the GTA and in fact around the province, helping to reduce wait times for cataract surgeries by 60% in the Toronto Central LHIN. It’s this kind of movement which is going to provide a better quality of care.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: This government is moving services from an area that is not-for-profit and has oversight and accountability, into the community which has no oversight, no accountability and no way for people to know that they get quality care.

Another year of austerity for a hospital leaves them with little choice but to carve out services and hand them out to those private providers. You’re not going to be able to get a colonoscopy, an MRI or an echocardiogram in our publicly funded, not-for-profit, trusted community hospitals under this government’s plan. You will have to go to a private, for-profit clinic, with all sorts of fees associated with them.

The government talks about being progressive, but what I see on the ground is not. When will the minister recognize that his government’s health care agenda throws the door wide open to more privatization, where the real winners are the private clinics, not the patients?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, that is simply not true. The member opposite needs to understand what the facts are. I’m not sure if she has even read our platform, our action plan and what we propose to do.

Here’s what we’re not doing: We’re not creating private, for-profit clinics. We’re not charging patients for OHIP services. We’re not cutting care in our hospitals. We’re not moving care further from home. This is what we’re doing: We are shifting some routine, low-risk procedures out of the hospital and into the community through not-for-profit clinics, just like our hospitals are not-for-profit. I think the member opposite supports our hospitals being not-for-profit.

We’re talking about not-for-profit institutions in our communities. We’re talking about two new midwife-led birthing centres in Toronto and Ottawa that are giving expectant moms more choice in where they deliver their babies. I would hope the member opposite would support

that type of community care, which is bringing great quality of care through not-for-profits in the community, where patients want it, at a better cost to government and with better results for the patients themselves.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Han Dong: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

It's my privilege to represent the great riding of Trinity-Spadina, one of the most culturally diverse ridings in Ontario. Every day I'm reminded that our country is so great because of the contributions of newcomers. We are a welcoming country. That is at the core of what makes us Canadian.

So too is our commitment to universal health care, the radical notion that no one should be denied care when they need it. That is why many in Trinity-Spadina and across the country were deeply disappointed by the federal government's decision to reduce health coverage through the Interim Federal Health Program. I understand there was a recent federal court ruling on those changes.

Could the minister tell the House about this decision and how it relates to Ontario government policy?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'd like to first thank the member from Trinity-Spadina for his excellent question and congratulate him on his election to the Legislature.

Changes to the Interim Federal Health Program, a program and a population that I know very, very well, left many refugee claimants with little or no health coverage. This was a serious abdication of the federal government's responsibility to protect some of the most vulnerable people in our society and it showed a lack of compassion. A federal court ruling late last week ruled against that decision, calling it unconstitutional and even calling it cruel.

We have all heard of heart-wrenching examples: a patient who suffered a retinal detachment, an incident that often leads to blindness, whose surgery was cancelled when he couldn't afford it. We learned of a diabetic patient only kept alive by free insulin samples that were provided by a pharmaceutical company. That doesn't reflect the values I know we share as Canadians. Making sure patients get care when they need it is the right thing to do and it's my most fundamental responsibility as minister.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Han Dong: Thank you, Minister. Speaker, I'm pleased that a court has recognized and upheld principles that underpin our commitment to universal health care. The court decision is a step in the right direction, but I understand that the federal government may appeal. In the meantime, it is clear from the minister's remarks that there are many people who need care right now but are no longer receiving it through the Interim Federal Health Program.

Speaker, through you, could the minister tell us what is being done to ensure refugee claimants are getting the care they need?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The member is right: Some refugee claimants face health challenges while waiting for the federal government to determine their status. Cuts to the IFHP, the federal health program, have left them unprotected and put our doctors and our health care workers in an untenable position, forcing them to choose who should and shouldn't be treated. That's why our government, the provincial government, vigorously opposed this decision, and it's why we joined with other provinces to reinstate access to essential and urgent health care services for refugee claimants through the Ontario Temporary Health Program.

The federal court's ruling confirms what we've said all along: that our health care system must reflect the principles of fairness and certainly compassion, providing the right care for those who need it.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Bill Walker: Mr. Speaker, through you to the Premier: On June 4, you received a 20-page document and letter from the municipality of Grey Highlands seeking your commitment to move forward with the Grey Bruce Health Services' Markdale Hospital. You received yet another letter from me on June 24, where I reiterated my support for the hospital project.

Over the years, your government has had lots of conversations about this project. Regrettably, it's going on 11 years since your government pledged to build this hospital and nine years since the great people of Markdale and area raised \$13.2 million, which still sits in the bank.

Premier, will you please tell me, can you confirm that infrastructure money will be allocated in the budget and that the hospital promise your government made to my constituents was not purely made for partisan political purposes?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I thank the member opposite for the question. Of course, we're working closely with Markdale Hospital to make progress on this important capital investment. I appreciate the member bringing it to our attention again. It reflects the significant infrastructure investment, the capital investment, that we're making in hospitals and health facilities right across this province. It's a multi-million dollar investment.

In fact, even when you look at one aspect of this, small and rural hospitals, we've invested over \$115 million towards capital investments to strengthen care. In this fiscal year alone, there are 91 different projects across the province where we're working with important partners like Markdale to make sure that we're making that progress through capital and operating investments to ensure that the quality of care continues to improve for patients. It's so badly needed.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bill Walker: Again to the Premier: To be fair, six years ago you did actually erect a sign promising and

committing to this project for the Markdale Hospital. You know this hospital project is of profound concern and need to my constituents. The community stepped up to the challenge and raised \$13.2 million as part of the challenge you put in front of them, and they want you to honour your commitment.

Premier, I respectfully ask you, do you accept that the case for a rebuild is strong? And on what timeline do you envision this redevelopment taking place?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm pleased that the member opposite, like I'm sure many members in the Conservative caucus, acknowledge and agree that infrastructure investment is of vital importance to this province going forward. So the \$129-billion investment over the next 10 years that this province is making—and how much is for hospitals?

Interjection.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: It's \$11.4 billion specifically for hospital capital investments. I'm glad that you acknowledge the importance of that.

We are working closely with Markdale. There's no doubt that there will be further conversations to see how we can move that project forward in as expeditious a manner as possible. I'd be happy to sit down with the member opposite to talk to him. I know this is an important project to him and I look forward to seeing how we can continue this project together.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Yesterday, I asked the Premier how much this government plans to pocket from the whole or partial privatization of the LCBO, Hydro One and Ontario Power Generation. I asked because on page 4 of the Liberal Party's infrastructure program it clearly states that the plan is to pocket \$3.15 billion from the sale of public assets. The Premier and the Minister of Finance refused to answer my question yesterday, so I'm giving it another shot, another opportunity, Premier.

Will the government tell this House how much is slotted into the government's fiscal framework for the full or partial sale of these core public assets?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The member opposite knows, if he looks at the budget, the numbers that we have laid out in terms of our projections, in terms of our revenue, in terms of the investments that are necessary. But he's asking a question that I've actually already answered. What I've said is that we have asked Ed Clark and his team to look at the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario to make sure that they are working to the very best benefit of the people of Ontario. I believe that it's the government's responsibility to do that, to make sure that we optimize the value of those entities, whether it's real estate or whether it's an organization. That's what Ed Clark is going to do with his group, and we will absolutely keep the House and the people of Ontario apprised of the optimization of those assets. But I don't have the specific answers at this point because we've asked him to do that work.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The \$3.15-billion asset sale figure from your platform is interesting, because 15 years ago the Mike Harris PCs sold off Highway 407 for \$3.1 billion. We're talking that scale of a sale. If you know you're going to raise at least \$3.15 billion from overall asset sales, you also know how much you're planning to get from the whole or partial sale of OPG, LCBO and Hydro One.

So this time please answer the question: How much of the \$3.15 billion that your platform says will be raised through asset sales comes from the sale of LCBO, OPG and Hydro One assets?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the member for Toronto—Danforth is jumping to a conclusion that is not a forgone conclusion. He's leaping to an end point that may or may not be the case. He's engaging in a hypothetical and I'm not going to go down that road.

The reality is we've asked Ed Clark to look at the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario. I'm glad that the member raised the issue of the 407, because it reinforces my point, which is, had there been a process when the previous government was in office, had there been a rational process to look at that asset, the 407, I believe that different decisions would have been made and the people of Ontario would have benefited much more and would not have lost that asset and the ongoing stream of revenue that is lost to the people of Ontario because of a decision made by a government that did not take the time and did not take the responsibility to do it right.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Arthur Potts: My question is for the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. When our parents and grandparents, and maybe some members of this House, can no longer be cared for in their homes and they need to transition to long-term care—and in my community of Beaches—East York there are many who are transitioning into long-term-care homes—we want the best possible care for them when they transition. I know that investing in long-term care has been a priority for our government. An important part of that is redeveloping older facilities so they can provide state-of-the-art care in renewed space. Could the minister inform this House of the government's plan for long-term-care re-investments?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I'd like to begin by thanking the member from Beaches—East York for the question. Congratulations on an excellent win.

I'm committed to the 77,000 residents who live in Ontario's long-term-care-home facilities—that they will get the highest standards of care. A big part of this commitment is our plan to modernize our existing facilities. That is why our budget had money set aside so that we could help our long-term-care operators to redevelop and modernize 30,000 beds. Unfortunately, the PCs and the NDP voted against this budget.

I look forward to the reintroduction and passage of this budget so that we can get on with the work of redeveloping and modernizing these 30,000 beds and investing in our seniors.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you, Minister, and, through you, Mr. Speaker. I am sure that the residents of the long-term-care facilities in Beaches–East York—such as True Davidson Acres and Ina Grafton—and their loved ones were very pleased to hear that this government has plans to redevelop and create so many more beds in the communities and across the province.

As we all know, in the long-term-care facilities, residents don't just depend on the care they receive from hard-working nurses; they need personal support workers and other front-line health care workers in this long-term-care sector.

Speaker, through you, would the minister please tell us what the government is doing to ensure that residents in long-term-care homes receive the best possible care that they can get?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Thanks again to the member from Beaches–East York. I also want to thank the thousands of Ontarians who go to work in long-term-care homes every single day to care for our family and friends. That is why our government has funded over 10,000 new full-time, front-line staff in long-term care since 2003, and we have provided homes with \$20 million so that they can provide training to their staff to improve the safety of our residents and to advance the quality of care.

We have also hired over 600 full-time staff since 2011 through our Behavioural Supports Ontario to improve care for residents with challenging behaviours, and we're adding 75 nurse practitioners in our LTC homes to prevent unnecessary ambulance use, prevent injuries and improve resident care.

We've brought in tough legislation to protect residents by allowing stronger enforcement and better inspections of long-term-care homes. We will continue to make investments in our long-term-care sector.

MUNICIPALITIES

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is for the Attorney General. In February, my private member's resolution called on this government to implement a comprehensive long-term solution to reform joint and several liability insurance for municipalities, and to do this by June. AMO, the Insurance Bureau of Canada, insurers in Perth–Wellington and beyond, and 200 municipalities have supported it. All parties in this Legislature supported it, yet the June deadline has passed. I will ask the minister this question: When will you get it done?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I want to thank the member for asking and being so persistent with the question; however, legal liability reform is an important and complex issue.

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I understand that this issue has been of significant concern for municipalities. AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, has asked the government to consider the impact of the law on joint and several liability on municipal insurance. At my ministry, the Ministry of the Attorney General, and in the legal community, two options are under consideration. One of the models is modification of joint and several liability—it could look very simple for some of us, but it's a very complex issue. Indeed, if this bill is passed, there will be winners and losers, and that's what we have to consider before moving forward with it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: With all due respect, this has been going on since I was a councillor back in the municipality of North Perth, and that goes back seven or eight years that I have heard about this issue. AMO and many municipalities are supporting a combined model which would place reasonable limits on the damages that can be recovered from a municipality. In Perth–Wellington, municipalities including Stratford and the county of Wellington are asking you to support this.

Minister, the time for consultations is over. Municipalities have spoken. My question is this: When will you get it done?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Again, Mr. Speaker, this is a complex issue. There are two different models that have been suggested. One of the models, which the member is talking about, is a model that was adopted in Saskatchewan, and we are reviewing this model. Another model will limit municipal liability for negligence in road maintenance to two times the proportion of damage.

But like I said, in the two situations, there will be winners and losers. It's a very complex matter, and we want to make sure that we have it right before we move forward.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. When Ontario families need hospital care, they should be able to trust that there's actually room at their local hospital, but that's not the case in Thunder Bay. For much of this year, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre has been literally in gridlock. They have funding for 395 beds, but they routinely have 30 more patients waiting for a bed. They are doing the best they can to provide care, and that has pushed their deficit to \$5.5 million.

My question is this: When will the government step up and provide the funding for hospital beds that Thunder Bay so obviously needs?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm really happy to get this question, actually, because we have provided that funding, and we are making important improvements to health care in Thunder Bay and the Thunder Bay region. I have to thank the member from Thunder Bay–Superior North

and the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan particularly for their hard work and their advocacy on this—and the community leaders that they have been working vigorously with on this issue.

Recently, we announced that we're investing almost \$14 million to improve access to emergency care and to enhance community health care services, measures which will improve not only those types of services but also, of course, the hospital-based care that is available to residents of that region. This additional funding is going to support Thunder Bay's three largest health care providers: the Regional Health Sciences Centre, St. Joseph's Care Group and the North West Community Care Access Centre.

These are important measures. I'm happy to speak in more detail in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Liberals have made many, many promises, but the fact is that health care austerity continues under this year's Trojan Horse budget. Another year of frozen hospital budgets means there are not enough hospital beds in Thunder Bay and their deficit is ballooning.

This government's decisions are putting pressure on everything from staffing to laundry services. In fact, the way the hospital is coping with the lack of funding is to open 300 new parking spots to raise money off of patients to try to pay their bills. When will the Premier announce a real plan to address the gridlock in the Thunder Bay hospital?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Well again, Mr. Speaker, the facts just don't match with what the member opposite, the leader of the third party, is saying. We're creating 26 new hospital beds to help more people with long-term illness or disabilities receive the specialized care that they need. We're funding up to 17 more spaces in supportive housing so that seniors and people in need of care can remain independent and out of hospital. We're expanding a nurse outreach program to provide up to 500 more seniors and people with complex needs with home care services, again to keep them as close to home as possible and out of hospital. We are staffing 10 acute care hospital beds to treat up to 600 more patients per year and helping to recruit up to 10 full-time and 14 temporary emergency-room doctors to improve access to urgent care.

These are the steps that we're taking. We're investing dollars to do that. They are important improvements to that region, that important region in the province. So I'm not sure where the member opposite is trying to go to—we are seeing the progress that we want to see in terms of quality of care.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Mr. Chris Ballard: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour. This summer, many young people are starting new jobs in restaurants, golf courses and retail shops around the province. I know in my community of Newmarket–Aurora, the numerous golf

courses, auto parts manufacturers like Van-Rob and Magna, and Upper Canada will offer many new job opportunities for youth. But the statistics show, Minister, that young people are three times more likely to be injured in the first three months of their job than experienced colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: What are we doing to ensure that our newest and least experienced workers are safe at work?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Let me first congratulate the fine new member from Newmarket–Aurora. Congratulations on being elected to the House here.

Speaker, the question is a very important one. We are all saddened in this House when we hear of a workplace fatality when it involves a young person, and I know our hearts go out to the family and the co-workers of those who have been injured or killed. The more tragic, or the equally tragic, part of that is that these incidents that lead to injury or death are indeed often preventable.

As the member said, it's true that new and young workers are most likely to get hurt. That's why the ministry conducts an annual safety blitz for new and young workers. The goals of this blitz are very, very simple: We ensure that new and young workers are properly oriented, trained and supervised, and we ensure that their employers are taking every reasonable precaution to protect new and young workers.

But we need everyone playing a role in keeping our workplaces safe. This blitz is going to raise awareness of workplace health and safety amongst our young people.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Chris Ballard: Thank you to the minister for that response. We know that our youth are helping to build a stronger and more competitive economy here in Ontario, and I was encouraged to hear about the minister's annual health and safety blitz. I think it's very important to be out there in the summer educating and enforcing safety rules as students work to save for college and university. But surely the minister's safety blitz cannot go to every single workplace in the province.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: What is the government doing to ensure that all new young workers have access and an understanding of their basic health and safety rights? Also, what is the ministry doing to ensure that those youth whose first language is not English are properly trained in health and safety?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thanks to the member for another fine question. I want to assure the Legislature that this ministry takes health and safety very, very seriously. Reducing injuries, eliminating fatalities: number one priority for this ministry.

Last fall, we passed a regulation that made it mandatory for all workers and supervisors to complete basic health and safety training. As of July 1 of this year, just recently, workers and supervisors are required to have taken this training. Speaker, I should note that that includes everybody in this room, including yourself.

We have made it easy to complete this training online at the Ministry of Labour website or through free work-

books available at ServiceOntario locations across the province. It comes in many languages: English, French, Chinese, Spanish, Punjabi, Portuguese and Hindi, just to name a few.

It's true that many Ontarians will already be aware of these basic rights and responsibilities, but the exercise we're going through with the mandatory training that came into effect is going to make a good system even better, Speaker.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Toby Barrett: To the Premier: Premier, just before you became Liberal leader in 2012, you made a commitment to eliminate Ontario's deficit by fiscal year 2017-18, a promise you continue to reiterate. I'll go back to your quote of 2012: "When I say we need to stay on our government's fiscal plan of balancing the budget by 2017-18, I mean it."

1130

You say, in three years a zero deficit. However, your hand-picked economist, Don Drummond, projects in three years a \$30.2-billion deficit. Premier, how do you square this \$30.2-billion discrepancy?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I think I would advise the member opposite to actually read what Don Drummond had to say about that. The point he was making was that if we did nothing, that is the reality we would be facing. What we have done is we made very clear steps to reduce our deficit—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's enough. Finish, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We are committed to balancing the budget by 2017-18, and we've had to make tough decisions in the past in order to move to that direction. Every single time we took a difficult decision, you stood up in opposition to that.

What I'm saying is that all of us agree—all three parties agree—we must get to balance. We're looking for constructive ways to get there. You do have some responsibility to support the transformation that—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound will come to order.

Supplementary.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Well, back to the Premier: We have no indication from you of how your promise will be kept. Nothing will come of nothing. Your Minister of Finance is expecting revenue shortfalls in the coming years.

Back to the Premier: How will you keep your promise? Is it selling assets, cutting government programs and services for families, seniors, the vulnerable in our society, jacking up taxes on the middle class? Or do you plan on breaking your promise to balance the books in

three years? What is the plan for 2017-18? Is it to cut government spending by \$30.2 billion? Is that the plan?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I think all of us are looking forward to the budget being introduced next week. I don't think there will be any surprises, though, because we've committed to introducing the same budget that was not supported by either party when we introduced it earlier this year. It clearly lays out a path.

We have actually become the lowest spender in the country on a per-capita basis. Our program spending is down to 1.4% annually. We're looking ahead to 1.1% annually. We're on track to meeting those deficit targets. But what I don't understand is that we seem to have an "austerity everywhere but my riding" attitude on your side of the House, where people will stand up and advocate for more spending in their riding but no spending overall.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Miss Monique Taylor: To the Minister of Health: Recent reports say that parking fees at the Juravinski Cancer Centre in my riding of Hamilton Mountain would be raised to as much as \$25 a day, which is a 25% increase. One patient who travels to receive care puts it this way: "They know they have a captive audience."

Parking fees amount to a health care levy on sick people. When will this government follow through on its election promise to cap out-of-control hospital parking fees?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question because it gives me the opportunity on behalf of the government to remind the members opposite that in fact, in our platform during the election, we committed to putting a cap on parking fees at hospitals and at our health care facilities. I agree with the member opposite that it's incredibly important that access to our health care services is provided in an equitable fashion, so we intend on moving forward as we committed in our platform. I suspect we're going to have the third party's support on that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Miss Monique Taylor: Just so the minister knows, the fees have already been increased last week.

The Canadian Medical Association and New Democrats call hospital parking fees a barrier to health care access and an unnecessary stress on patients and families. The Liberal government may not see it, but the people in my riding and people across this province need relief now from these out-of-control parking fees.

We haven't seen any directive to the hospital administrators to cap the fees, even though you made the pledge during your election campaign. Since then, the government has been silent. My constituents are hoping that this is not just something that was said at election time.

When will this minister act immediately and cap hospital parking fees?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm glad to have the member opposite's support. It's too bad that you didn't put it in your platform if it was that important to you then, but we did,

and it's a commitment that we're going to follow through on.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to be working closely with local communities, with our hospitals and our health care facilities because one size does not fit all. The circumstance in a particular community or locality is different from one to the next, so we're going to work in a responsible fashion and we're going to cap or, in some cases, cut hospital parking fees so that they are acceptable.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I want to leave the members with a message. It's never too late to receive a warning, or ever too late to be named.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1136 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Bill Walker: I'd like to introduce my cousin Betty Perkins, in the members' gallery; my aunt Lillian Currie; and Jim McKane. Jim was my successful campaign manager. He has also recently accepted an appointment by the federal government to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. Welcome to Queen's Park. They're here for my maiden speech, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Maiden speech? We've been remiss.

Further introductions? Last call for introduction of guests.

It is now time for members' statements. The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. This does not constitute your maiden speech.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Mr. Bill Walker: This does not constitute my maiden speech.

It is an honour to rise today in recognition of the many volunteers and dedicated partners of the Ontario Student Nutrition Program.

In my riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, these hard-working volunteers have achieved an astonishing 100% participation rate, with the Student Nutrition Program running across all schools. We are, in fact, the only area in the southwest region to have reached the 100% participation rate, with over 12,000 students eating breakfast, lunch or snacks every day at their school.

In addition to the meals and snacks at every school within the Bluewater District School Board and the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board, the program is also available at Cape Croker; at all Keystone programs; the French school in Owen Sound, St-Dominique; as well as the Montessori school in Owen Sound.

It is evident that this success would not have been possible without strong supporters and volunteers and people like Bev Gateman, who is Grey Bruce Eat and Learn school nutrition program coordinator. Bev herself says, "The volunteers would not rest until each school was on board and offering food to children in need."

Mr. Speaker, I'm encouraged by their resolve and passion. It is evident that no child can learn while hungry and that the breakfast program is critical to our children and youth's well-being and is critical to starting their day ready to learn.

Grey Bruce Eat and Learn has enjoyed tremendous support from the local community as well as the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, but we can't stop here. I encourage all members in this House to donate to it so we can serve more schools and students who have long bus rides, who don't eat breakfast at home or who may not get food anywhere else. With the cost of a healthy breakfast being about \$1 per child, your donation could help to ensure that healthy food choices—bagels with cream cheese and jam; egg and cheese sandwiches; fruit; yogurt; chocolate milk; the list is endless—continue to be available on a daily basis to all students in need. Your donation can and does mean a lot.

RIDING OF KENORA–RAINY RIVER

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I would like to take a moment to thank the people of Kenora–Rainy River for the confidence they have shown in me. It is truly an honour and a privilege to serve the hard-working and honest people of northwestern Ontario. Campaigns are huge undertakings, and they don't happen on their own. I would like to take a brief moment to thank each and every person who helped out on my campaign.

A fantastic team of people stepped up to help: the sign crew, canvassers, office staff, the campaign team, election day volunteers and more. What a wonderful thing to have so many people committed to the same end. I'm very pleased to once again represent Kenora–Rainy River in the Ontario Legislature. Each volunteer who contributed their time and effort deserves acknowledgement. Thank you to each of you.

I know that we have much work to do. Throughout the campaign, I met many people who are struggling just to make ends meet, to pay their hydro bills and to have money left over to put food on the table. I met people who were worried about their jobs, retirement security and health care.

I was inspired by the strength and resiliency of my fellow northerners, and I am humbled to be the one who's entrusted to represent our views, concerns and our way of life at Queen's Park. It is a tremendous honour, and I'm looking forward to the challenge that it brings.

ARMENIAN FESTIVAL

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm very pleased to rise in the House today to acknowledge the Armenian National Committee

of Toronto and their excellent work promoting awareness issues affecting Armenian Canadians. The Armenian National Committee of Toronto helps foster better understanding about Armenian culture and history and also provides opportunities for social and political engagement in our community.

This upcoming weekend, the national committee and the Armenian Community Centre will be hosting the 18th annual Armenian SummerFest. SummerFest is a three-day outdoor celebration that features Armenian singers from around the world as well as games, music, dancing and food. Each year the event has grown. It is now considered the largest Armenian festival in Canada and draws crowds from across Canada, the United States and Europe. The festival is being held at the Armenian Youth Centre, located at 55 Hallcrown Place near Victoria Park and Highway 401.

This is an event you do not want to miss, and organizers expect that more than 6,000 people from around Ontario will be attending. Together, we continue to build a strong, culturally diverse Ontario.

I'd like to take this opportunity to invite all of my colleagues in the House and everyone watching at home to join me at this fantastic annual SummerFest. I also want to wish the best success to those who are participating in SummerFest. I look forward to celebrating this annual celebration.

JOB LOSS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: There is great concern about the announced layoffs today at Ontario Northland's Ontera division. This is in addition to recent staffing and service reductions at the North Bay Regional Health Centre and teacher layoffs at the Near North District School Board.

Speaker, today we just learned the government is bulldozing ahead with the sale of Ontera, with nearly 70 jobs being cut in northeastern Ontario, including my hometown of North Bay.

We know from the Auditor General's report on Ontario Northland that the sale of Ontera will cost the taxpayers between \$50 million and \$70 million, so I am outraged that the government is continuing with this fire sale of Ontera, knowing that it will not save them any money, as they had announced earlier.

Last year, the government fired 40 nurses at our hospital, and just prior to the election campaign, it was announced there would be a reduction of 60 beds there. I recently met in my North Bay office with Shawn Shank of CUPE to learn more about these cuts. As it turns out, nearly 300 nurses have been fired across Ontario by this government.

As well, residents were alarmed when it was announced that eight teachers were being laid off at the Near North school board. Just last night, we learned from the board that there will be even further staffing reductions.

This government has made some pretty indignant claims about being opposed to cuts, but cuts are hap-

pening right now under their watch. Speaker, this is what happens when the government doesn't spend within its means. Front-line services we care about are being eroded.

I urge this government to stop picking on northern Ontario and start governing responsibly.

EVENTS IN SUDBURY

Mr. Joe Cimino: I welcome any opportunity I have to showcase my community. Greater Sudbury is a fantastic place to live, work and play. For example, we have many dedicated individuals and organizations who organize festivals for our residents as well as for visitors. We celebrate multiculturalism and diversity.

Some of the festivals that we look forward to in Greater Sudbury are:

The Canada Day festivities held at the Sudbury Community Arena, which are sponsored and organized by the Sudbury Multicultural and Folk Arts Association;

We just completed the Italian festival this past weekend at the Caruso Club, which my family and I thoroughly enjoyed;

The Northern Lights Festival Boréal also took place this past weekend and highlighted multicultural, bilingual and aboriginal components of northern Ontario through music, crafts and storytelling;

The dragon boat races will take place July 12. This year, funds will go towards the Northern Water Sports Centre;

The blueberry festival is a great place to be, from July 13 to 20, with locally picked berries and wonderful treats;

Pride, July 14 to 21;

The Greek festival will be held July 25 to 27, with great food and entertainment, I assure you of that;

The Whitefish Lake First Nation powwow, July 26 and 27;

SummerFest, August 21 to 24, which will have two mainstage concerts and 120 local performers as well as a lot of activities for children;

The garlic festival, August 24, at the Ukrainian Seniors' Centre downtown;

The ribfest, August 29 to 31;

The jazz festival, September 5 to 7; and

Cinéfest, Canada's fourth-largest film festival, will also take place this fall.

I encourage everyone to come out and have fun.

WORLD CUP

Mr. Han Dong: Mr. Speaker, as you know, this past month has seen the world celebrate its beautiful game of soccer. The World Cup is a celebration of diversity, athletic ability and human potential. It's an opportunity for the world's communities to come together in a shared spirit as they compete for this coveted prize.

This diversity and competitiveness is best seen in my riding of Trinity-Spadina, one of Canada's most diverse

ridings, which plays host to immigrants from all over the world, from Little Italy to Little Portugal and in between.

The World Cup has been an important economic stimulator to the various small businesses in the community: establishments like Caffè Brasiliano; Café Diplomatico; Sicilian café; and the Toronto FC fan favourite, the Football Factory at Richmond and Bathurst.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate all the teams, especially Italy, Portugal and Korea, on their performance in the World Cup.

As we await the battle of Germany versus Brazil, where the streets of Trinity–Spadina will be painted in yellow and green for the host country, I look forward to engaging with the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport as he continues our preparations for the Pan Am Games, where we will see some of those talents on display again right here in Toronto.

1510

JOE BEST

Mr. Todd Smith: On May 20, North Hastings lost a very industrious, community-minded individual. We lost Joe Best. The day before, I was up in Bancroft, attending an event with the members from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, when the news came that Joe was in his final few hours.

We talk a lot about people in this chamber as being fixtures in their community. In small communities across Ontario we often have people like Joe Best, who seem to be at the centre of their community.

As the former reeve of Monteagle township and warden of Hastings county, Joe served his community in elected office, but he was never far from the centre of any community activity because he loved and never stopped working for the people of North Hastings. He was very active in his United Church community as well.

Joe is survived by his wife, Bessie; his daughters, Cathie and Shari; his grandchildren, Sandy, Jamie, Bryce and Todd; and his great-grandchildren, Andrew, Emma and Cooper.

During the election campaign, I had the opportunity to talk to his brother Claude as well, who was very distraught about the idea of losing his brother Joe at such an unfortunate time.

Joe Best was a great man, a great servant of his community, and it was an honour to have known him.

Joe wouldn't have wanted me to leave this out: In 50 years, he never missed a single Tory event in North Hastings. He was as true blue as they come, and you don't get friends like that every day. Thanks, Joe.

FIRE IN BRAMPTON

Ms. Harinder Malhi: It is a great honour to address this House for the first time and a greater honour to serve the people of Brampton–Springdale.

On June 8, 2014, on Ardglen Drive in Brampton, a devastating fire left 100 Bramptonians homeless and

claimed the life of 10-year-old Nicholas Gabriel. As these families struggled to cope with the loss of their homes and loved ones, the Brampton community rallied around these families in their time of need. The response has been overwhelming.

Sarah Lewis, a single mother who felt the need to do something for the victims of this tragedy, decided to organize a fundraiser for the Ardglen families. With the help of the Brampton community, they were able to raise over \$9,500 for the Nicholas Gabriel/Ardglen trust fund. The community did not stop there.

The Punjabi Press Club of Canada and Highest Level Entertainment hosted a local fundraising dinner that I had the privilege to attend. The Brampton We Care event is yet another example of how the Brampton community is making a meaningful difference in the lives of these families.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge Mr. Russell Peters, a native Bramptonian and a constant force for good in the community. Whether he's donating his time to raise funds for the development of Brampton Civic Hospital or donating \$10,000 to cover the cost of Nicholas Gabriel's funeral, Mr. Peters is a kind and generous man who deserves our appreciation and our thanks.

I want to personally thank everyone who has supported the victims of this horrific tragedy. Such expressions of compassion demonstrate our sense of community, and we will continue to support the Ardglen families as they rebuild their lives.

MIRACLE LEAGUE OF OTTAWA

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: It is an absolute honour to rise today representing my riding of Ottawa–Orléans for the first time.

Today, I would like to highlight an organization that shares my passionate commitment to improving our community. The Miracle League of Ottawa is one of 10 national finalists for one of the most generous community development competitions in Canada. The Ottawa-based not-for-profit is now competing for a grand prize total of \$100,000 that will help to build the first-ever baseball diamond and playground in the country for children with disabilities.

The president of the Miracle League of Ottawa, Mr. David Gourlay, estimates that more than 4,000 children with physical disabilities in the region, and their families, will benefit from this remarkable project.

The park will have a rubberized surface that is safe for children who use walkers or wheelchairs.

The Rotary Club of Orléans has been a tireless advocate for this project, and this is why I'm here today to advocate. I am asking every member of this chamber to take the time to spread the word and to ask their friends and their families to go and vote in support of this inspiring project. Please vote between July 21 and July 22 at www.kraftcelebrationtour.ca. With your help, we can bring this miracle to Ottawa–Orléans.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I believe the member from Scarborough Southwest has a point of order.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I would like to introduce a group of individuals who are here today in the gallery just beside me here, with your indulgence, Mr. Speaker.

The 97th annual Lion's Club International Convention began on Friday, July 4, and concludes today on Tuesday, July 8, 2014.

I would like to introduce some guests who are with me today: Penny Emmanouil, dermatologist and past district governor, 117A, Greece; Emilianos Chrysopoulos, multiple district council chairperson, Greece-Cyprus, here with his spouse, Chrysoula; Minas Chatzidakis, district governor, 117A, Greece, with his spouse, Rita, and his son Nick; and finally, Popi Moutafis, second vice-governor, 117A, Greece, with her husband, Dr. Stylianos Moutafis. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We welcome our guests from Greece.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PUBLIC SECTOR
AND MPP ACCOUNTABILITY
AND TRANSPARENCY ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR
LA RESPONSABILISATION
ET LA TRANSPARENCE
DU SECTEUR PUBLIC
ET DES DÉPUTÉS

Ms. Matthews moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 8, An Act to promote public sector and MPP accountability and transparency by enacting the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act, 2014 and amending various Acts / *Projet de loi 8, Loi visant à promouvoir la responsabilisation et la transparence du secteur public et des députés par l'édiction de la Loi de 2014 sur la rémunération des cadres du secteur parapublic et la modification de diverses lois.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm proud to stand in the House today to reintroduce a package of far-reaching measures that would, if passed, build a more transparent and responsible government that is accountable to all Ontarians. The proposed legislation includes many different measures which would, if passed, strengthen accountability and oversight, including expanding the role of the Ontario Ombudsman to include municipalities, school

boards and universities; establishing a patient ombudsman to oversee hospitals in our health care sector; strengthening government oversight of air ambulance providers; making it an offence to willfully destroy government records; and setting compensation frameworks for broader public sector executives, including hard caps. I do hope that my colleagues in the Legislature will share our commitment to open government and will work with us to pass this historic legislation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I do want to reference that the normal case is to read from the explanatory notes for short statements when we introduce bills. I remind all members of that.

MOTIONS

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding House proceedings for Thursday, July 10, 2014.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that notwithstanding standing order 98(a), private members' public business shall not be considered on Thursday, July 10; and

That following routine proceedings, if the debate on the motion for an address in reply to the speech from the throne has been concluded, the Speaker shall adjourn the House without motion until Monday, July 14, 2014; and

That notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot items 1 through 6, inclusive, be waived.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Naqvi moves that notwithstanding standing order 98(a), private members' public business—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? Agreed? Agreed.

1520

Do we agree on the motion? Agreed? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Bill Walker: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Green Energy Act has driven up the cost of electricity in Ontario due to unrealistic subsidies for certain energy sources, including the world's highest subsidies for solar power; and

"Whereas this cost is passed on to ratepayers through the global adjustment, which can account for almost half of a ratepayer's hydro bill; and

"Whereas the high cost of energy is severely impacting the quality of life of Ontario's residents, especially fixed-income seniors; and

"Whereas it is imperative to remedy Liberal mismanagement in the energy sector by implementing immediate reforms detailed in the Ontario PC white paper Paths to Prosperity—Affordable Energy;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009, and all other statutes that artificially inflate the cost of electricity with the aim of bringing down electricity rates and abolishing expensive surcharges such as the global adjustment and debt retirement charges."

I fully support it, will affix my name and send it with page Thomas.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, a petition from across the province:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

I agree with this petition. I will affix my name and give it to page Matthew to bring up to the Clerk.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario's Drive Clean Program was implemented only as a temporary measure to reduce high levels of vehicle emissions and smog; and

"Whereas vehicle emissions have declined so significantly from 1998 to 2010 that they are no longer among the major domestic contributors of smog in Ontario; and

"Whereas the overwhelming majority of reductions in vehicle emissions is the result of factors other than Drive Clean, such as tighter manufacturing standards for emission-control technologies; and

"Whereas the environment minister has ignored advances in technology and introduced a new, computerized emissions test that is less reliable and prone to error; and

"Whereas the new Drive Clean test has caused the failure rate to double in less than two months as a result of technical problems with the new emissions testing method; and

"Whereas this new emissions test has caused numerous false 'fails,' which have resulted in the overcharging of testing fees for Ontario drivers and car dealerships, thereby causing unwarranted economic hardship and stress;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"That the Minister of the Environment takes immediate steps to begin phasing out the Drive Clean program."

I'm pleased to affix my signature and send it to the table with page Nardien.

CREDIT UNIONS

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to present this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads:

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario's economy and create jobs in three ways:

"—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

"—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

“—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries.”

I'm pleased to affix my name to the petition and will send it to the Clerks' table through page Victoria.

HYDRO RATES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further petitions? The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I start, congratulations on your appointment. A pleasure to be here, with you in the chair.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Green Energy Act has driven up the cost of electricity in Ontario due to unrealistic subsidies for certain” new “energy sources, including the world’s highest subsidies for solar power; and

“Whereas this cost is passed on to ratepayers through the global adjustment, which can account for almost half of a ratepayer’s hydro bill; and

“Whereas the high cost of energy is severely impacting the quality of life of Ontario’s residents, especially fixed-income seniors; and

“Whereas it is imperative to remedy Liberal mismanagement in the energy sector by implementing immediate reforms detailed in the Ontario PC white paper *Paths to Prosperity—Affordable Energy*;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To immediately repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009, and all other statutes that artificially inflate the cost of electricity with the aim of bringing down electricity rates and abolishing expensive surcharges such as the global adjustment and debt retirement charges.”

I fully support this, will affix my signature and send it with page Nardien.

DENTAL CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from all over Ontario, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas thousands of Ontarians live with pain and infection because they cannot afford dental care;

“Whereas the promised \$45-million dental fund under the Poverty Reduction Strategy excluded impoverished adults;

“Whereas the program was designed with rigid criteria so that most of the people in need” still “do not qualify; and

“Whereas desperately needed dental care money went unspent” or some “was diverted to other areas even though people are still suffering without access to dental care;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To do all in its power to stop the dental fund from being diverted to support other programs; and

“To fully utilize the commissioned funding to provide dental care to those in need.”

I fully support this petition and will affix my name to it and ask page Matthew to bring it to the Clerk.

GASOLINE PRICES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further petitions? The member from Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you very much, Speaker. I too want to congratulate you, not just on your re-election by the people of Chatham–Kent–Essex, but also on your elevation as one of the deputy speakers.

I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the price of gas is reaching historic levels and is expected to increase another 15% in the near future, yet oil prices are dropping; and

“Whereas the” McGuinty–Wynne “government has done nothing to protect consumers from high gas prices; and

“Whereas the high and unstable gas prices across Ontario have caused confusion and unfair hardship to Ontario drivers while also impacting the Ontario economy in key sectors such as tourism and transportation; and

“Whereas the high price of gas has a detrimental impact on all aspects of our already troubled economy and substantially increases the price of delivered commodities, adding further burden to Ontario consumers;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and urge the Premier to take action to protect consumers from the burden of high gas prices in Ontario.”

I'm proud to sign this petition in support and affix my signature and send it to the table with page Nardien.

1530

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from Madame Lorraine LeBlanc, la directrice générale de la communauté Alzheimer de Sudbury.

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

“Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

“Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

“Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

“Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches”;

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario “to approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Victoria to bring it to the Clerk.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Bill Walker: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Green Energy Act has driven up the cost of electricity in Ontario due to unrealistic subsidies for certain energy sources, including the world’s highest subsidies for solar power; and

“Whereas this cost is passed on to ratepayers through the global adjustment, which can account for almost half of a ratepayer’s hydro bill; and

“Whereas the high cost of energy is severely impacting the quality of life of Ontario’s residents, especially fixed-income seniors; and

“Whereas it is imperative to remedy Liberal mismanagement in the energy sector by implementing immediate reforms detailed in the Ontario PC white paper *Paths to Prosperity—Affordable Energy*;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To immediately repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009, and all other statutes that artificially inflate the cost of electricity with the aim of bringing down electricity rates and abolishing expensive surcharges such as the global adjustment and debt retirement charges.”

I fully support it, will affix my signature and send it with page Daniel.

SOINS DENTAIRES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further petitions? The member from Essex.

M. Taras Natyshak: Merci, monsieur le Président. I also want to congratulate you on your nomination and acclamation to the Speaker’s chair.

Je veux introduire une pétition à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario qui dit :

« Alors que des milliers d’adultes ont de la douleur et des infections parce qu’ils ne peuvent pas se payer des soins dentaires;

« Alors que le fonds dentaire de 45 millions de dollars de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté exclut les adultes pauvres;

« Considérant que le programme a été conçu avec des critères rigides de sorte que la plupart des gens dans le besoin ne sont pas admissibles; et

« Alors que l’argent pour les soins dentaires n’a pas été dépensé et a été détourné vers d’autres fins, même si les gens continuent de souffrir sans accès aux soins dentaires;

« Nous, soussignés, demandons à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« De faire tout en son pouvoir pour empêcher que les fonds dentaires soient détournés pour soutenir d’autres programmes ;

« D’utiliser pleinement le financement pour les soins dentaires aux personnes dans le besoin. »

J’appuie cette pétition. Je vais la donner à Matthew.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. John Yakubuski: I have a petition for the global adjustment charge on hydro bills.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Auditor General of Ontario defines the global adjustment charge on hydro bills as ‘mostly consisting of the difference between the market price and the price paid to generators as set by the board for OPG or under contract with the government or the OPA’; and

“Whereas the Auditor General says the global adjustment has been rising steadily over the last few years and is expected to continue to rise from \$700 million (prior to the 2009 passage of the Green Energy Act) to \$8.1 billion by 2014; and

“Whereas the Liberal government’s 2010 fall economic statement stated that hydro bills are expected to rise 46% by 2015, and that new renewable power generation would account for 56% of that increase; and

“Whereas small to mid-sized businesses across Ontario are seeing the global adjustment portion of their monthly hydro bills increase significantly to the point that it is now larger than the actual energy portion of their bills; and

“Whereas many of those businesses are now delaying investment or hiring, or both, and considering either closing or moving outside of the province of Ontario as a result of delivered-to-market industrial energy rates that are now the highest in North America;

“We, the undersigned, do hereby petition the government of Ontario to reverse course on its expensive energy policy by cancelling the feed-in tariff (FIT) subsidies and treating Ontario’s energy as an economic development tool so that it once again is a competitive advantage for Ontario in retaining and attracting jobs and investment.”

Speaker, I support this petition, affix my signature and send it down with Nardien.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Resuming the debate adjourned on July 8, 2014, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Joe Cimino: I'll begin by congratulating the Speaker from Brant for being elected, and the deputy speakers as well. As I see so far, you have definitely earned my respect in terms of the work you do.

I'd like to take a moment and really congratulate everybody who put their name on a ballot, regardless of which party. It takes a lot to put your name on the ballot—a hard campaign. To the new MPPs in the House and to those aged—those who have come back—congratulations. Sorry, Paul.

I am going to take quite a bit of time to talk about my predecessor, Rick Bartolucci. I think that Rick, when you take into account the fact that he gave up about two decades in this House, close to 20 years, and then city council previous to that—he has shown his commitment to Sudbury. He has shown that he was willing and able to sacrifice, especially for those of us who come outside the GTA, family time to serve the public. He should be congratulated and commended for the time he has given to the public sector.

During the election campaign, he was very cordial; always a gentleman. I spoke to him a couple of days ago—three or four days ago—and again, very friendly, and I always appreciated his friendship. In terms of his legacy, I think when we think of Highway 69, him working in a minority government situation to bring forward the importance of twinning or four-laning Highway 69, doing it—and I remember very well his postcard petitions. I'm sure he's still watching to make sure Highway 69 gets done, and I'll speak to that later on.

I'd like to also thank our leader, the New Democrat leader from Hamilton Centre. She campaigned vigorously during the campaign, whether it was zigzagging the province via automobile, via bus or airplane, selling our platform, speaking to a lot of people. During the campaign, she came to Sudbury two times, and we did a town hall phone meeting as well. Her time in Sudbury is very much appreciated. The fact that we received or earned over a million votes, I think, is testament to the fact—and that's the highest amount since 1990—that people want us here, the New Democrats, to keep the government to account.

I knocked on many doors—probably 6,000 or 7,000 doors—and the themes that I heard very clearly were affordability, accountability, jobs, senior support, and the need for infrastructure money to deal with the pothole situation we have in Sudbury. People are talking about

affordability, especially when you talk about hydro rates and price of gas for automobiles, which in Sudbury for some reason is 10, 12 or 14 cents, sometimes even higher, compared to municipalities not too far down the road, as well as keeping the home heating gas, natural gas, the lowest rates possible. Insurance rates also came up at the door as being too high in Ontario.

1540

The issue with affordability is that people want more money left in their pockets at the end of each month. People want to be able to save for the education of their children. Seniors want to stay home as long as possible. People want to have money left over to do other things like, as we heard in Sudbury, taking their children on a trip, for example.

Accountability: People are quite clear in their belief that we can't talk about cutting services and yet have money wasted by government. The tax dollar and the taxpayer in Ontario need to be respected.

When we talk about jobs in Sudbury, we went through a phase of many of our youth leaving Sudbury for other municipalities, other cities, and even out of the country for jobs. We want our youth and our young adults to stay in Sudbury and to find work. That's why the Ring of Fire is so extremely important, not only for all of northern Ontario, but obviously for Sudbury in the smelting that would happen north of Capreol.

Interjection.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Found in Nickel Belt.

Seniors very clearly were saying that they want to stay in their homes as long as possible. If they're healthy, they should stay at home. They can with support and, again, with lower hydro rates, for example.

I will talk about road conditions in Sudbury and potholes later on in my address.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank my supporters in Sudbury. The people of Sudbury have been very generous. I received over 14,000 votes and won about 70% of the polls. I can tell you that I represented ward 1 at city council. The people of ward 1 were very friendly; I received votes from that area that the NDP have never received.

I thank my relatives, the Italian community, the multi-cultural community, anglophones, francophones, everyone who came out and supported me. It's very much appreciated.

My campaign team, Patrick, Brad, Frank, Ryan, Tina, Scott, Dominic, Jean-Marc, Darren, Nathan, Kathy, Valerie, Chad, Julie, Kristina, Eddie and Jane—these people were on my campaign team, and I can tell you without a doubt, 16-, 18- and 20-hour days towards the last few days. I thank my campaign team immensely.

The volunteers who put up close to 3,000 signs—it took a while to take them down: Thank you to them. Thank you to the volunteers who came door to door with me whether it was rain or hot weather; I appreciate that.

We had new, young NDPers come out. We had youth. It was great to see 14-, 15- and 16-year-olds come out, brothers and sisters from various unions, the building

trades, Sudbury firefighters, as well as fellow educators—teachers, educational assistants and other child care workers. I appreciate that very much.

I should take some time and thank my family. My wife, Luisa, really is there every time I need her. She is the shoulder that I lean on. She's there every night—I can call her now from Toronto—giving me encouragement. She was there to bring food to the volunteers. She was there to take care of our two girls when I wasn't able to go home basically for five weeks. So thank you to my wife, Luisa.

My daughters, Vanessa and Vania, are 10 and four. They lost their daddy for four or five weeks. They understand, I think, what I was going for, and I do appreciate their encouragement, their dedication and their smiles when I came home.

My brother John, sister-in-law Sabrina, my sister Rosa and her partner, Robert: Thank you very much for your encouragement and kind words.

My parents, Letizia and Antonio Cimino, who emigrated from Italy as well in the early 1960s, taught me the importance of hard work, dedication and integrity.

My in-laws, Lucrezia and Antonio Mastroianni: Thank you very much for lending me your truck when I needed it and bringing food to the volunteers and spending time in the community to get me the support I needed.

To my brother-in-law Adriano and sister-in-law Jenna: Thank you very much for all you've done for me.

A little bit about my riding of Sudbury, which obviously borders Nickel Belt—the member for Nickel Belt and I work closely together, so a lot of these comments are between both our ridings. We are a city of lakes, 330 lakes, actually, in our borders, and fantastic people. Maclean's, a few years ago, declared that Sudbury had some of the friendliest people in Canada because of the volunteer hours that they put forward.

We are a community of communities; the city of Sudbury was amalgamated in 1999-2000. Fourteen years later, we are a better city for it, I believe, or a greater Sudbury, and yet we've preserved the differences within each community. I think that is a wonderful aspect of greater Sudbury—a strong francophone community which we're very proud of, anglophones, a multicultural community and a community of First Nations, which is growing. The multiculturalism can be seen through the festivals I listed earlier today, traditional gatherings and different events throughout the riding.

Sudbury is known for being a mining community. We have a rich history in mining, and we will have a long future in mining. One of the other industries that came out of mining is the mining supply and services industry, which provides employment for thousands of people. The mining supply and services sector sells supplies, services, talents and technologies around the world. We are very fortunate to have them in our community.

We are a health referral centre of northeastern Ontario, with a lot of research happening in health, science, ecology and mining.

We are a retail hub of the north, with commercial outlets seemingly opening every year.

We can boast of three post-secondary educational institutions. We have Laurentian University, Cambrian College and Collège Boréal. Laurentian University, which I am an alumnus of, is bilingual. I can tell you that since I graduated in 1991, we can now boast of a faculty of education, a northern medical school and, last year, a northern school of architecture, which is changing the landscape of downtown Sudbury.

Cambrian College, which my wife graduated from, has wonderful programs. I can tell you her education is serving her well. It's also a bilingual institution.

Collège Boréal, which is one of two French colleges in Ontario—the only one in northern Ontario—has fantastic programs like trades for women.

If you're into summer and winter activities, Sudbury—Greater Sudbury, the Sudbury riding and Nickel Belt—is the place to be. In the summer, enjoy our lakes, the fishing, motorized and non-motorized trails and a lot of campgrounds. There's just so much to do. In the winter, a fantastic amount—a plethora—of winter activities: skating on Ramsey Lake, which is in the centre of our city; skating in the skating oval at Queen's Athletic Field; snowshoeing; snowmobiling; cross-country skiing; downhill skiing—there's just so much to do. I welcome everyone to join us in Sudbury.

Sudbury has 160,000 people, approximately, and here's the challenge that we face as a community and as a city council: We have approximately 60,000 ratepayers and about 40,000 waste water ratepayers. That number is lower because some draw water from private wells, some draw water from lakes and some have private septic systems.

That might sound like a nice, cozy city, and it is. However, here's the challenge that city council faces in Sudbury: the fact that our area is huge—3,200 square kilometres. Just to put that in context, 15 southern Ontario cities fit within our border. Toronto, Mississauga, Newmarket, Orangeville, Richmond Hill, Ajax, Oakville, Oshawa, Aurora, Burlington, Vaughan, Pickering, Grimsby and Whitchurch all fit within our border. We have a small amount of ratepayers, relatively speaking, to other communities, paying for a large geographic area.

What does that mean? Approximately 3,600 lane kilometres of roads; 873 kilometres of water main; 793 kilometres of sewage pipe; 14 arenas; 13 libraries; 68 sanitary lift stations; 25 fire stations; 620 municipal buildings; 21 deep wells; two water treatment plants; 10 waste water treatment plants; 11 ambulance stations; seven community service centres, because some people live quite a distance from the downtown; and approximately 406—I'm sure that number's small now; I'm sure it's grown—fields, playgrounds and other parks.

So again, that's the challenge that we face in Sudbury as a community: a small amount of ratepayers paying for this entire geography. When it comes to, for example, Maley Drive—which I'm glad the Liberal government has said numerous times during radio ads during the election that it would support—the Maley Drive extension is a road that city councils have been looking

to build for over 20 years. It's a road that's parallel to Lasalle Boulevard, which would take the slurry trucks off of a commercial route which is used by residents. These slurry trucks are beating up our roads. It would take them to another route, which would make life safer and have less effect on our current roads.

1550

Some 3,600 lane kilometres of roads means we need a lot of money to maintain them. There are a lot of potholes in Sudbury and, again, a small amount of taxpayers to pay to support the road system that exists. The taxpayers are tapped-out in Sudbury. That's why, when I hear that monies will be spread across northern Ontario, hopefully Sudbury and Nickel Belt will not be forgotten. The city council has put forth an unprecedented \$35 million towards road repairs; it should be \$70 million. There's a shortfall we have—and we're not even going to talk about the infrastructure, the sewer and water underneath the road.

I look forward to my critic portfolio in transportation. As a city councillor, I think I have some background and insight in the area. We do need new, better and safer highways. We do need to keep reviewing winter maintenance and making sure that our roads are as safe as possible in the winter. In Sudbury, we undertook that review with front-line workers, union members, management and councillors. Again, it's always under review to ensure the safety of our residents. Public transportation and active transportation are vital.

Highway 69: I'll speak about that for a while. I think Highway 69 was also in the media during the election campaign. I can tell you, it needs to be completed for the safety of our residents. Too many lives have been lost, with too many injuries on that highway. The four-laning has to be done. I can tell you, I will be pushing that issue with my colleague from Nickel Belt, I'm sure. It has been "on the radar" of the government and it needs to be completed sooner rather than later.

And of course, bridges need repair, not just in municipalities but across the province.

In terms of the throne speech, Liberals make big promises, but we need to remember some facts and some information. Unemployment rates in Ontario are still higher than the national rate, since 2006. Over 300,000 manufacturing jobs have still not come back. Hydro rates have increased 300% since the Liberals have taken government and are expected to increase another 42% in the next five years.

Again, hydro rates are a big burden. They're a burden on our citizens, they're a burden on our families, and they're a burden on seniors who want to remain home as long as possible. They're a burden on businesses that would rather spend their money on expansion. In Sudbury, they're even a burden on facilities like curling clubs, for example, that can't meet their annual expenses because of the high rate of hydro.

Child care: Sudbury is one of the 18 communities that has seen cuts in affordable daycare funding from the province. As a result, Junior Citizens Day Care, a muni-

cipally owned daycare in Sudbury, is now being looked at in terms of having to close. This is a facility that has workers who have worked there for a long time and created rapport with families, and do a fantastic job in assessing and identifying the needs of students prior to them entering the school system. That is a shame. It is a model that should be mimicked and not one that should be cut.

We also need to support our horse racing industry. Again, I met with horsewomen and horsemen at the stables and observed one lady crying because her family has been in the business for many generations. We have farmers who are affected. We have stable owners and trainers who are affected. The horse racing industry, Sudbury Downs, has to be up and running. We need that industry. We talk about creating industry; well, here's one that we want to remain and not disappear.

ER wait times: Again, it's very important to get those ER wait times down. The New Democrats have put forth a good plan in terms of hiring nurse practitioners and 24-hour family health teams. The member from London—Fanshawe and I heard, when she visited me in Sudbury and met with stakeholders, that it's easy to call 911 and get brought to the ER and get treated and then discharged. The problem is that there's no home care at home. What's happening is that people are calling 911 again to go back to the ER. Home care is essential.

Again, we heard over and over in the last week or so the plans for the LCBO, Ontario Power Generation and Hydro One. I'm really not sure what the plans are, but if it's divesting, we have some concerns that we need to be watching that portfolio very closely.

Priorities: We need to keep our seniors at home. Once they need support, we need some long-term-care beds and some quality spaces for them.

We need to keep our youth from moving away.

We need infrastructure money to improve our roads, and like the member from Windsor—Tecumseh and I heard when he visited Sudbury and we visited some bridges, we need some infrastructure money across the province.

We need more family doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses and personal care workers. We need to reverse the reduction of monies to affordable daycare. We want people to work, but I heard that if they are paying \$1,000 a month for daycare, it makes it very difficult for parents, single dads or single moms to go to work. We need those home care demands met. We need cities to be consulted. And in Sudbury, we need a PET scanner. We need a positron emission tomography machine.

I knew Sam Bruno personally. I can tell you, I met with him and I passed a motion at council which we wrote together. He is no longer with us. He lost his battle with the disease. But I can tell you that his family still, five years later—last year was the fourth year that they had a gala, fundraising hundreds of thousands of dollars to purchase a PET scanner for Sudbury, the only region in the province that does not have one, and I think that's a shame. I think we owe it to Sam Bruno to have that

come to Sudbury. I know the member for Nickel Belt has put forth several petitions, many petitions, in terms of a PET scanner, and we need that in Sudbury.

As an educator for almost 20 years, I'll finish my points by saying that how we serve our children best is by providing as much one-on-one support as possible. That means EAs in the regular classroom. That means other child care workers. In special education, which I have worked at in the last seven or eight years, we need more money for assessments and more money for programs for our special education and special-needs children.

I'll end with that. These are the priorities I think should be on the agenda of the government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments, please.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I would like to congratulate you on your appointment in the House, the Legislature. I know how difficult it is to be elected, so congratulations to you. I also would like to congratulate you on your appointment as transportation critic. We look forward to working with you.

I thank you also for your kind words about our former member for Sudbury, who was a champion in his own community. So thank you very much and congratulations.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? The member from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

Interjection.

Mr. Bill Walker: Oh, I'll defer. Sorry, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Yes, the member from North Bay.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker.

I, too, want to congratulate the member from Sudbury on your election to this fine Legislature, and for your kind words about the former member as well. I'm really looking forward to working with you, as well as the member from Nickel Belt and all of the other members from northeastern Ontario, northern Ontario, and all of Ontario, for that matter. But I really am looking forward to the opportunity to get together and chat about issues of mutual concern. I think we're going to have four years where we need to continue to chat together about Highway 69, Highway 17—highways of mutual concern and mutual issue to us.

So I really do want to take this opportunity to welcome you. You gave a wonderful speech, your first speech. I think it was right from the heart, which is what I expect we're going to see more and more from you. You certainly seem to be a person who speaks right from the heart.

I did enjoy my years as mayor of the city of North Bay and coming to Sudbury and chatting with your council and your mayor as well, and getting to know your wonderful councillors. We always have such a great rivalry between Sudbury and North Bay, particularly a hockey rivalry.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: And Timmins.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Well—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes, we have a rivalry.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Well, a hockey rivalry, an OHL hockey rivalry: the Sudbury Wolves, and of course we now have the North Bay Battalion back. So I will continue to look forward to walking over there with my hand extended on small bets over the Sudbury Wolves and the North Bay Battalion. I hope that you'll take my hand and maybe share a small bet, a soda or something along that line, and maybe we can sit and chat a little bit more in our traditional northern Ontario ways.

I think you're going to be a wonderful member, and I congratulate you on your election.

1600

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'll correct my record and my apologies to the member: the member from Nipissing, not North Bay.

Further comments and questions, please.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was a real pleasure for me to listen to what the member for Sudbury had to share with you. I have known the member for Sudbury for a long time. He and I share a community, and I have worked with him on many occasions.

I think what you saw today was the true Joe. This is who he is; this is what he brings forward. He is an extremely good listener. He can connect with people easily. When he sets his sights on something, he puts the time, effort and energy to succeed. He does it in a way that is always very personable—and more power to him. I hope you got a glimpse of who the new member for Sudbury is today through his first speech.

I know that it is always nerve-racking to speak in this House, especially when you first get elected, but you could see by the way he was able to speak from the heart that he meant what he said, whether it is saying thank you to the former member from Sudbury, who was not from the same party but did great things, and he's quite capable of acknowledging this and saying thank you, as well as laying out, in his first speech, the list of priorities that he intends to work on. I have no doubt, if we look back, you will see that he will act on each and every one of those.

A note of caution, though: If you see him and say hello and he doesn't say anything back to you, it's because it's his twin brother. They look identical.

Interjection: Rob Ford?

M^{me} France Gélinas: No; he has a real twin brother named John. They look identical. One will recognize you and talk to you. The other will say, "I'm not Joe." But they look identical, and he does come down to Toronto every now and again.

Congratulations to you, my friend. I look forward to working with you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: What a pleasure it was to hear the new member from Sudbury with his maiden speech. I commend you enormously for some of the issues that you've brought forward. We met briefly during the

orientation seminar. After all of these years dealing with the public, I have to say that I think I have a pretty good sense of what people are like. I was impressed with you. Just hearing your words today about some of the people in your community, I can see that you will be a very strong representative of your community.

It is the stories of the single moms out there that need to be brought forward in this room. It's the stories about the equipment that is needed in your hospitals in your community that we need to be very adequately bringing forward in this Legislature, so I commend you on that. You've done a marvellous job.

I do look forward to working with you. I know that you have more than adequately understood the implications of this on your young family, so I commend you for that as well. I know what it's like to leave family at home, although mine is a little bit older than yours. It does mean something, and it's a sacrifice that we all need to be aware of. I think that it's critical that we remember who brought us here and the work that's happening in our community to support our being here. You're obviously somebody who's very in tune to people and who gets that picture quite adequately.

Thank you so much for that. I look forward to working with you in the future, and please feel free to say hello at any time.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Unless it's his brother.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Unless it's your brother, of course.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now back to the member from Sudbury for his response.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Thank you to the members from Ottawa–Orléans, Nipissing, Kingston and the Islands and, of course, the member from Nickel Belt. I can tell you, listening to you makes me even more nervous, because I think that's the biggest transition, from city council to the provincial Legislature. The biggest transition from waking up in the morning, going and teaching during the day, and going to city council in the evening is that I get to go home at night. Here, I'm in Toronto for four days a week. As scary as that might be, I think when you take into account the fact that there are a lot of people who are encouraging you and urging you on and saying wonderful things about you, like I've just heard now—and thank you very much—it does kind of set you back a little bit.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Joe, it's only one day.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Yes, it's only the one day. I'm told that these kind words will stop, so thank you.

Hopefully this will be a good four years and a productive four years for the province, for our ridings, and obviously, for Greater Sudbury—the Sudbury riding in Nickel Belt.

I'd like to take the opportunity to thank the member from Nickel Belt. I can tell you that over the last eight years on council, the number of events that we attended together was too many to count. Always a supporter, always a friend, you helped me during the campaign. We knocked on several doors together, and I think it was

very useful to have, and continue to have, the member from Nickel Belt on my side.

We're all here together to serve the public. I think we all have the best interests of our ridings at heart, and together with my caucus I think we are going to do what the people of Ontario ask us to do, and that is to work to make Ontario better. We will speak from this side on issues that are important and on items that maybe we do not agree with—it might be loud at times.

With that, I can tell you: Thank you to the caucus for welcoming me. It's been a great week and a half. I won't even guess how many moments are left. Thank you to everyone.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I am honoured to rise as the member for Cambridge for the first time in this unique, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to address this chamber.

Speaker, I offer congratulations to you on your election as Speaker. You have shown yourself already to be fair, disciplined and effective. Thank you for allowing your name to stand for this election. It takes courage and conviction to put your name on a ballot.

I also offer hearty congratulations to the other members on your elections to this 41st Legislative Assembly.

I want to take a moment to offer a sincere thank you to former MPP Rob Leone for his vigorous voice in this place and for his service and sacrifices in representing the city of Cambridge and the riding of Cambridge since 2011. All of us here understand what it is like to put our lives on hold for public office. He is the father of three young sons, and he indicated recently that on this past Father's Day he was very happy to spend an uninterrupted Father's Day with his family.

Acknowledging the people who have helped me in my election campaign is almost daunting as there are not enough ways to say thank you. Allow me to recognize the incredible efforts and the belief by the members of the Cambridge riding association that it really was possible to elect the first Liberal in Cambridge in 71 years. The mood at our victory party on June 12 was absolutely electric. To the many volunteers, supporters, donors and young people who have been with me on this eventful journey to Queen's Park, I say a heartfelt, sincere and grateful thank you.

Kayla told me recently that June 12 was her 18th birthday and she voted for me for her first vote—I was pretty honoured. The polling clerks apparently sang her Happy Birthday. It was very memorable for her, and I thank Kayla.

It is my supporters' hope and unwavering friendship and effort that continue to inspire me each and every day to become the best representative of the Cambridge riding that I can be. My supporters will ensure that I will serve all of our communities, recognizing that those who hold differing viewpoints are our friends and neighbours. Indeed, having open debate in this legislative chamber is a privilege that I hold dear and a responsibility that I readily assume to serve all of the citizens of this great and diverse province.

1610

Thank you to all of my family, and in particular to my husband, Fred McGarry, whose undying support gives me the strength and ability to serve our constituents each and every day; and to my children, whose patience, selflessness and fierce loyalty make me continuously proud. You inspire me, support me and you willingly share my time and energy with all the others in our community. The greatest gift I have ever been given in this life has been the gift of knowing each and every one of you. Rory, Georgie and Jenny have already launched their adult lives; and also to our sons at home, Alex, Liam and Declan, thank you.

About 10 days ago a TV series called *Murdoch Mysteries*, set around the turn of the 20th century, was filming here on the steps of Queen's Park. I was quite taken aback by the signs held aloft by the period-costumed actors in the scene, which read "Votes for Women." It made me realize what a long way we have come as a society since that time about 100 years ago. My mother-in-law passed away last year, three months shy of her 100th birthday. When she was born, women in Canada did not have the right to vote; before she passed away, Ontario had its first female Premier in history—all within her one lifetime. What a difference a few strong women leaders made at that time in striving to achieve equality for all women. How inspiring. I am proud and humbled to be the first elected female MPP in the riding of Cambridge; and I am honoured to serve under the first elected female Premier of Ontario. Premier Wynne's leadership inspires me and women of all ages.

Interestingly, in 2011 the set location scouts of this series, *Murdoch Mysteries*, chose Cambridge as a frequent filming location. These scouts were no doubt as captivated as I was, when I moved to Cambridge in 1988 by the natural beauty of Cambridge and in particular the Speed and Grand rivers, which flow through the city's core. The confluence of the Speed and Grand rivers is near the village of Blair, the oldest inland settlement in Ontario, founded in 1800 by the Pennsylvania Dutch settlers. These lands were once the summer home of the First Nations aboriginal peoples, the Neutrals.

The Grand River was designated as a national heritage river in 1994 and it's one of the very few heritage rivers in this system that runs through an urban area. Bald eagles and rare species now inhabit the shores of these rivers, delighting passersby.

Cambridge also boasts a rich architectural heritage, with many early stone and brick buildings along the riverbanks, downtown cores and tree-lined residential streets. The large number of heritage buildings has also been an important element in Cambridge's economic history. The beauty of the heritage buildings draws many to its downtown cores, boosting tourism and the local economy of shop and restaurant owners. The city gains revenues from the filming of many movies, due to the historic settings.

Now, little did I know, when I joined a heritage organization 20 years ago to advocate for and lobby Cam-

bridge city council frequently to preserve our heritage buildings, that I was embarking upon my political career. Someone asked me to consider running after one such city council meeting, and here I am today.

The city of Cambridge was amalgamated in 1973 and is comprised of the original towns of Hespeler, Preston and Galt. These towns were founded along the rivers to take advantage of the water power to run the many grain and textile mills that were the driving force of the early economic engine.

Cambridge and North Dumfries make up the riding of Cambridge. Speaker, we are part of the two-tiered municipal government of the region of Waterloo. Today, Cambridge is one of the fastest-growing areas in the country. Ideally located astride Highway 401, it is part of Canada's technology triangle. Advanced manufacturing, auto manufacturing and space manufacturing companies such as ATS, Toyota and COM DEV employ our highly skilled workforce in Cambridge. IT companies within the region also make up part of our workforce. This government invested in expanding Conestoga College into Cambridge. This and the University of Waterloo's School of Architecture within our borders ensure that our young people have great opportunities to choose a quality post-secondary education close to home.

Cambridge is also home to a growing multicultural mix of families, a very vibrant arts and culture scene and an incredible system of walking and cycling trails, many along our rivers. The Liberal government partnered with our federal and municipal government to build the recently opened Dunfield Theatre, part of the Drayton theatre group, and it has surpassed its expected ticket sales in its very first year. Over 60% of our guests are from out of town, and the local businesses are really enjoying the increase in customers and their revenues.

Speaker, North Dumfries township is home to about 10,000 residents. It's distinctly rural, and it also includes the largest town of Ayr and smaller towns of Roseville, Branchton and Clyde. Agriculture and gravel extraction contributes to the local economy. Several areas are designated as environmentally sensitive policy areas. Remnants of the threatened Carolinian forest remain in North Dumfries, and several rare species of reptiles, birds and plants are found here. I live in one such area. I reside in the rural countryside of North Dumfries and really delight in and enjoy seeing the rare sandhill cranes and osprey, and I love being serenaded by the spring peeper frogs in the pond every spring.

With a strong foundation of support services, a diverse economic base, the beautiful riding of Cambridge is an ideal place to live, work, play and raise a family.

Speaker, in the throne speech we heard about this government's commitment to health care, education and improving transportation for Ontario, among other things. The Liberals' shared values that government should be a force for good in people's lives—and continued investment in our core public services—motivated me to seek public office, and I believe it's these values that really set apart this government.

Helping patients and their families while working as a registered nurse under all three political parties in the last 30 years stirred the need in me to become politically active at a time when hospitals and health care services were being cut. It made sense to me to spend less to provide home services to keep people in their own homes rather than in costly long-term hospital admissions.

Speaker, in the early 1990s, our oldest son had a chronic lung illness that became life-threatening. At age 10, he was admitted to hospital for most of the next four years. He narrowly avoided a double lung transplant at a time when only 11 had been performed in Canada. In the 1990s, home care was not a priority for the Ministry of Health or well-resourced. Our son was not eligible at that time for home services. Since 2003, this government has invested significantly in community care, increasing services, home supports and care for increasingly complex health conditions at home. Today, if our son was assessed for home services, given the same medical condition, he could receive enough home care that he could have avoided spending much of those four years in hospital. The impact on our family would have been a much more normal life between the acute phases of his lung disease. Fortunately, our son's health improved so that he is leading a more healthy life. Rory could have lived his life with a "poor me" attitude but chose to strive for excellence in his education and again in his work, and he is now an industrial designer in Ireland. He is my hero and my inspiration.

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Speaker, the benefit to our health care system would have been the saving of hundreds of thousands on the hospital bills incurred from his prolonged hospital stays. The realization of the importance of smart strategic investments in health care heightened my political awareness. To ensure continued improvement and expansion of health care and home care, I ultimately decided to run as a candidate for the Liberal Party.

The throne speech has served only to strengthen my commitment to public service and the Liberal Party, as this government is committed to transforming health care, placing the patient at the centre and making strategic investments in community care to keep people where they want to be: in their home rather than in a hospital. Until elected, I was a care coordinator for the community care access centre, and I strived to provide the right care in the right place at the right time and was able to help more of my clients to achieve this goal because of these direct investments.

The throne speech, Mr. Speaker, describes a plan that builds on our world-renowned education system by planning to continue improving learning so that our children have the best possible start in life and our young people are prepared to lead in the global economy. The youth jobs strategy helps connect young people to promising careers and a robust apprenticeship program. Many college-age students really depend on the 30%-off tuition grant that helps many pay for post-secondary education.

I share this government's vision for my own children. We have a fairly unique situation in our own family, as there's a wide gap in our children's ages. I often laugh when I say we've had children in school for decades and under all three provincial governments. From this comparative perspective, I recognize the importance of the Liberals' continued investment in our education system, which cemented my resolve to run for this office.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased about this government's planned investments in order to move Ontario forward. This is an important cornerstone in Ontario's plan for economic growth. Its plan to invest \$29 billion in transportation and transit projects over the next decade will support economic growth across the province. Transportation has been a front-of-mind issue for Cambridge and Waterloo region for some time. GO trains, light rail transit, improvements to the 401 and widening of Highway 7 are all important issues that many constituents and municipal politicians are eager to discuss in order to have Cambridge included in future plans. I am fully committed to making this a priority for Cambridge, and indeed I've already had two meetings with the mayor of Cambridge and various city councillors to discuss these plans.

Speaker, the Liberal government has improved infrastructure in Cambridge with new schools, school expansions, roads, bridges, the theatre and Conestoga College. But the main priority for the citizens of Cambridge and North Dumfries has been getting an expanded and redeveloped hospital. Our facility is one of the oldest in Ontario, and it has been an ongoing issue for very many years, with several false starts. I'm extremely proud to say the reality of this dream is only a few weeks away from the actual groundbreaking. The detailed design has been done over the last few years. The consortia that will build it has been chosen and should be announced shortly. We heard during the annual community meeting that the plans to start are actually as close as this September. That is an awesome occasion for the citizens of Cambridge. This Liberal government has delivered on its commitment to expand Cambridge Memorial Hospital to the people of Cambridge, and we could not be more pleased. I wish to thank the previous Minister of Health, Deb Matthews, for all her support to get this to a reality.

Helping people is at the heart of what motivated me to become a nurse. Being a nurse taught me how to earn people's trust, care for our most vulnerable citizens and advocate for the things that make a difference in people's lives. Over many years, I have been committed to helping in my community in many different sectors: planning; arts and culture; transportation; health care; social services; the environment; tourism; and community safety. Noting the lack of palliative care resources for families facing life-threatening illness, I became a founding member of the Hospice of Waterloo Region. I endeavour to be an effective communicator, and I am known as an engaged community builder. I will use all of these skills to be the MPP for Cambridge.

Speaker, the voters of Cambridge have shown their trust in me by electing me to Queen's Park to continue

my lifelong work of public service. The trust of my constituents must be earned, and I commit to establishing that trust with respectful, thoughtful service to the constituents of Cambridge; and, knowing that trust is hard-earned, I accept this responsibility.

I asked a political leader once what motivated him to continue on in the face of strong opposition. He said, "You know what it's like to help one family. Imagine what it's like to help all the families in Ontario." This resonated with me. I will endeavour to do my very best for the people of Cambridge and the province. It is indeed an honour to serve Ontarians with all my esteemed colleagues in this 41st Parliament.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd like to thank the member from Cambridge.

Questions and comments?

Mr. Bill Walker: To the member from Cambridge, thank you for your classy act of acknowledging the service of your predecessor and our colleague, Rob Leone.

You referenced a lot in your speech. Family—I just want to offer to you: Please always make them the first priority. At the end of the day, we do serve, but our family has to be our priority at all times.

On behalf of our PC caucus and my colleagues, I'd like to wish you the best of success in your tenure here. We look forward to working with you. Thank you so much, and welcome.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I want to give a big welcome to the member from Cambridge. This is my first opportunity to welcome a new member in the chamber, and if you would allow me to explain, I'm vicariously reliving, through your joy and bewilderment of this place, the sentiments I once felt when I was first elected in 2011. I feel your exuberance; I feel your energy. I'm very happy to see that you're here. You bring a lot to the table. A public health nurse: one of the most revered, respected careers that we have in our society. I look forward to hearing your information and sharing your ideas on how we can make our public health system even better.

Of course, everyone in this chamber in the province has had to deal with our system on an intimate level. We bring a lot to the table around the need to make it better. But of course, the fundamental principle of universality and access to public health is something that I think is universally protected and respected here, and I'm glad to hear that that is a sentiment that's come through in your maiden speech here today.

On behalf of New Democrats, we'd like to welcome you, and we look forward to working with you on an ongoing basis through this chamber. Congratulations.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Hon. Jeff Leal: Over the last two days, I've been very impressed by both the tenor and content of the maiden speeches that have been delivered on all sides of the House. I think it shows a great example of civility and the ability to reach out.

I'm reminded that in politics, you always stand on the shoulders of others. The new member from Cambridge stands on the shoulders of Mike Farnan, Gerry Martiniuk and Dr. Rob Leone as she takes her seat here and builds on the legacy of her three predecessors, which is so important.

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We got a great history lesson today: the amalgamation of 1973 of Preston, Galt and Hespeler to form the dynamic community of Cambridge. The member highlighted the great base of economic activity that indeed enshrines and encapsulates the modern-day Cambridge that came about some 41 years ago.

But what I thought was very interesting, Mr. Speaker, is the insight that the new member provided, both in her professional career as a registered nurse to look at what has happened in Ontario during three different governments of different political stripe, and looking at the education of her children through three different governments in the province of Ontario, and coming to a conclusion that she accepted the Liberal philosophy in order to move the residents of Cambridge forward June 12 and for many decades to come.

Mr. Speaker, I've got to tell you one thing. The first Liberal member from Cambridge in 71 years—there must have been great pent-up demand for a party June 12 in Cambridge after 71 years. Now, I would have enjoyed tremendously to have had the opportunity to join that joyous celebration after 71 years. This is an excellent member who will make a great contribution on behalf of her riding here at Queen's Park.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I, too, want to welcome the member from Cambridge to this chamber. It's a humbling experience. I've only been here since 2011 and it has taken some time to try to get used to the way the House works and how you work with other colleagues in your work and in this chamber.

For a little while my son lived in Galt—I'll call it Galt—part of Cambridge. I remember he was married shortly after he moved there and we had a reception at the Newfoundland Club there. The people in that club were truly a great bunch of people and they made us feel welcome, and we certainly had a great time during the festivities that we had there.

I come from a rural riding. My biggest city is Stratford, which is about 30,000 people, but most of my riding is rural. I'm sure that you will enjoy the rural part of your riding. Most people in rural Ontario, as all Ontarians, are very welcoming and I'm sure they're going to make you feel welcome during your time here in the Legislature.

I think, as all members must remember, it's the people who voted us here that we work for. We work for all of those people, even the ones who didn't vote for us. I'm sure that you'll understand that and try to make your presence known in your riding. Again, I want to congratulate you on your election to this House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member for Cambridge for her response.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you to the members for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, Essex, Peterborough and Perth–Wellington. Interestingly, Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound is a beautiful riding itself, of course, with the lakes going on there. We have friends that live on Lake Huron, and it's certainly a lovely part of the world.

It's interesting that everyone does mention their families because indeed they're the most important thing in our lives. All of us members, no matter which side of the House that we sit on, really seek to endeavour to make sure that their family is at the heart of the reason why they run. Although we do differ politically, it is incumbent upon us, as members, to work together in the best interests not only of our own families, but also our constituents.

Certainly the constituents of Cambridge have asked me to represent them in this legislative chamber, much like the constituents of your ridings have sent you to the House to look after their particular interests. They really do expect us to work together in order to protect their health care and education services, to be fiscally responsible and to work together to address their identified priorities, many of which we've been hearing about in the last two or three days.

I certainly thank the members for recognizing that sometimes nurses do bring unique perspectives to their work in life and that some of the skills that we use in our day-to-day work, actually, we can use and transfer to other areas, in particular our skills in communication. So I thank you for all those comments.

The Newfoundland Club is certainly one of the areas where we do have a lot of celebrations in Cambridge, so thank you for those comments. They'll enjoy that.

As the member from a rural and urban area, I will endeavour to bring together some of the transportation issues and also some of the rural and agricultural issues that we do hear about.

So I thank you, everybody, for your kind attention and your kind words on this, my first time to rise in the House. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's normal tradition for someone to deliver their maiden speech in their first term, but due to all the challenges and issues that we had, I never got to that. I got right to work and just never got there. But I want to pay homage to those people that I believe are very important in my life and the reason I'm standing here today.

I'm extremely delighted that my aunt Lillian Currie is here—she's the last remaining sibling of my late father's family, so it's a real delight to have her here—my cousin Betty Perkins, my good friend Jim McCain, and one of my great team members, Ana Sajfert. It's a pleasure to have them.

Wow! I still pinch myself every day that I'm the member of provincial Parliament for the wonderful riding

of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. It is a pleasure and a privilege to serve my constituents and, by extension, the people of the great province of Ontario.

I am humbled that I join those who have served as MPPs before me, those who have worked or volunteered in any capacity at this revered institution, and of course my colleagues that I serve with from all parties and the staff, past and present, of this great Legislature. It is my commitment to honour your service by working my hardest and making the best decisions I can, both on behalf of my constituents of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, who are my first priority, and also in the broader context of what is best for the citizens, the taxpayers, the people of Ontario.

Many people ask, "Why did you become a politician?" It is not an easy or a short answer. For those of you who know me, that is a bit of a standard reply, and at times an understatement, Mr. Speaker. The reality is, there are a number of reasons. The most fundamental is that I care. To borrow the term, I want my dash on my tombstone to have meant something. I care about people and I want to know that I have used my life to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

In my senior year of high school, I served as head boy, now referred to generally as co-president, along with my dear friend Cathy Cook, who served as head girl. It was a fantastic leadership opportunity, and it was then that I would suggest I was bitten by the political bug.

After graduating from the recreation leadership program at Fanshawe College, I was given the privilege of being employed as the parks and recreation director and the organizer of the world-renowned, without a shadow of a doubt, Warton Willie Festival. I had the pleasure of attending a local Rotary meeting in Warton, and the guest speaker was a fellow by the name of Murray Elston, the MPP for Bruce–Grey at the time. Mr. Elston was a friend of my mentor, Mr. Thomas G. Norris, and was very well respected in our area. I honestly did not pay attention to his political stripe at the time. Murray was simply someone who, as I remember, spoke eloquently and inspired me. His speech stirred emotion in me and compelled me to get involved and make a difference in my community. I recall saying to myself, as I departed for home after his speech, "I want to be like Mr. Elston someday." I'm truly not sure how much reality I gave to it at that time, and it certainly wasn't an "I must absolutely do this" career decision. However, it is a case of a seed being planted, and it is one of those situations whereby you just never know where life's journey will take you if you're willing to step through the door of opportunity.

Lesson 1: Be prepared to take a risk and live life to the fullest every day.

I had always been involved in community development and tried to do what I could to make the community a little bit better. I'm a believer in the adage that it is a noble endeavour to offer yourself to public service, and I take great pride in telling people I am a public servant, a politician. It pains me, in fact, when I hear derogatory

comments about politicians. Sure, there may be the odd one who paints the rest of us with a negative brush. However, I stand firm that most people who enter this vocation are doing it for the right reason: to make a difference, to make the community, the province, the country, and, yes, in some small way, the world a better place.

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For me, public service has always played a key role in my life. Whether it was as parks and recreation director for the town of Wiarton, now known as the South Bruce Peninsula, the area manager for Heart and Stroke Grey-Bruce, the executive director of the Bruce Peninsula Health Services Foundation, the captain or coach of a sports team, or the manager of a festival or volunteer for a special event, I always seem to strive for roles where I could be in a leadership position and develop and motivate a team of caring and talented individuals.

A key lesson I fortunately learned very early is there is no "I" in team, and to be successful, you need to surround yourself and work collaboratively with other people with their own respective skills and talents.

Interestingly, just prior to writing this speech, I read the book *Orr: My Story* by Bobby Orr. He is, in many people's opinion, the greatest hockey player to have ever laced up the blades, and yet the main message I took from his book is how it takes a great team to accomplish any goal. Lesson number 2: Teamwork is the key to success. Surround yourself with equally committed people.

Somewhere along the line—and I'm not sure exactly the date or the timeline of my life journey—I remember watching a clip of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, JFK, and his famous quotation, "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country," from his inaugural address on January 20, 1961. It is strange, as he had been assassinated prior to me being born, and yet he is one of those figures who made, and continues to have, an impact on me. He was youthful and vibrant and provided hope to a nation that needed hope. He was a leader who made a difference, and his quotation is one that has always inspired me to action. While I'm not suggesting in any way that I'm anywhere even remotely close to his league, I do believe each of us can make a difference if we are committed and willing to make the effort.

More close to home, the Honourable William Grenville Davis, Premier from 1971 to 1985, and a member of the Ontario Legislature from 1959 to 1985, was a huge inspiration. During his tenure, Mr. Davis built much of our current education system as well as our nuclear fleet, and utilizing a balance of fiscal fortitude and social conscience, led our great province through some of the most progressive and successful times we have ever witnessed. Mr. Davis attended one of my fundraisers during my first election, and I will remember this auspicious occasion for the rest of my life. Thank you, Mr. Davis, for all that you did to make our great province the best that it could be.

At home, my cousin Howard Greig served his community on municipal council for 28 years. He retired last term as mayor of the municipality of Chatsworth after many years prior serving as a councillor and then reeve of the former Sullivan township. He also served in leadership capacities on a number of provincial boards and ensured rural Ontario, and specifically Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, had a voice heard at the table—a shining example of someone who remained grounded to his roots and who dedicated much time and effort to benefit his community.

Also, my friend and current member of Parliament for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, Larry Miller—Larry recently celebrated his 10th year of service as a federal politician and served 13 years before that as a municipal councillor and then reeve of Georgian Bluffs, formerly Keppel township, including a term as warden of Grey county. Larry has recently had Bill C-383, An Act to amend the International Boundary Waters Treaty Act and the International River Improvements Act, his private member's bill, or PMB, receive royal assent and be passed into law. This is a significant accomplishment, as very few PMBs ever become legislation. Congratulations, Larry, and keep up the great work.

And, of course, my hero: Terry Fox inspired with his selfless act of pure determination, positive spirit and enduring hope. He was a person who truly epitomized that we can all make a difference regardless of our lot in life. His quotations, "I just wish people would realize that anything's possible if you try; dreams are made possible if you try," "It took cancer to realize that being self-centered is not the way to live. The answer is to try and help others," and "Even if I don't finish, we need others to continue. It's got to keep going without me," are all examples that show that with a positive attitude, we can all make a difference. Lesson number 3: Make a difference. Every single person can make a contribution if they take action.

Mostly, however, it was my life goal and ambition to make my mom, Sarah Ethel Jean Walker, proud. People would often comment, "Are you a politician?" or "You would make a good politician." My predecessor, Bill Murdoch, a 20-year veteran MPP who served in this very hallowed House, approached me and suggested, "Have you ever thought of being a politician? I think you should try." After much thought, the idea of serving others at the provincial or federal level and the opportunity to be able to give something back to the community was something I thought would make my mother proud.

Mom was a special lady who had a challenging life. My dad passed away when I was 10 years old, leaving Mom solely responsible for me and my five siblings—no easy situation. However, Mom just picked up the pieces, moved forward and raised all of us to the best of her ability. Not once did I hear her complain.

She ended up with significant back problems and 15 years ago was diagnosed with breast cancer: again, no self-pity, no complaining. She merely accepted the challenge and made the most of her days. Instead of looking

for pity, she volunteered at the local hospital foundation, the Legion Ladies' Auxiliary and the Women's Institute. She focused on family and having fun and living on her terms. She was always smiling and looked for the positive in every situation, right up until October 26, 2013, the day she passed away at the wonderful age of 86 years young. It is with some sadness, obviously, and regret that she did not get to see or hear me deliver this speech. However, I take some comfort in knowing that the day I was elected, I had in some small way made her proud. I dedicate this speech to her.

Lesson 4: Attitude is key. Be positive and make the most of every second of every day.

Per my previous comments related to Bobby Orr, I am so thankful and grateful for the many people who have helped me, shaped me and mentored me over the years, and who continue to do so. There are too many to mention, and I will not attempt to do so for fear of missing and offending someone. The reality is, there have been many: some who in significant ways have helped to counsel me on one of my many significant life decisions, some who have said nothing but were there when I needed them most, some who have motivated me to take a chance, some who have derided me for making a decision that to them did not make sense.

I would be remiss if I did not thank all of those people who helped me with my nomination, my two election campaigns and my riding association. To everyone who contributed to Team Walker, whether by giving of your time and talents, financial support and/or moral support, please know I appreciate your generosity and extend a heartfelt thank you.

To my staff, Ana Sajfert, Sandra Breedon, Karen MacInnis, Susan McMillan and Lisa LaPierre, thank you. You are each a treasure in your own way and offer so much to the success we achieve as a team. You truly embody the character of teammates who are there when I need you every single day, and I hope you are proud of the work you perform to help and assist others. Thank you for all that you do, and know I truly do appreciate you and your families for the sacrifices you make for my benefit.

At the end of the day, we all need family and friends. To my mom, Jean Walker, my wife, Michaela, my sons, Zach and Ben, my mother-in-law, Dorothy, and father-in-law, Brian Eastwood, you are my foundation. You always will be, and even when my responsibilities take me away from home—and I apologize that that happens way too often—please know you are never far from my thoughts. I can't thank my family enough for supporting me to get here and for all the sacrifices they have had to make over the past few years. I appreciate your understanding and your immense support. I am so proud to have such an amazing family.

To my siblings, Marie, Gord, Norm, the late Marjorie, and my sister Bonnie and extended family, I cannot say enough for all you have done and continue to do.

To my friends, and you know who you are and the role you have played, thank you for being you. Thanks for

your support and encouragement. Each of you has played a key role in allowing me the privilege to follow my dream, and for that I am eternally grateful. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

I would also like to extend appreciation to all of my colleagues—and, yes, I consider you all to be friends and consider that we are a special fraternity. There are only 107 of us who are given the rare privilege to serve the greater good—107 people out of 13.5 million people. That is absolutely staggering to me. What a privilege.

We live a life that no one, not even our spouses, really understands. We live a life that some would suggest is one where we cannot win, as there is always someone taking a shot at you. We live a life that sees us away from our family and friends almost all the time. We live a life that requires us to always be on, especially in today's world of social media. We live a life that requires us to be jacks of all trades and yet masters of none as we are hit with wave after wave of information and requests from all areas. We live a life that requires us to be decisive, bold and compassionate, knowing full well that most decisions will be criticized and/or heckled. We live a life that challenges us to make decisions that will impact the lives of millions, people we will never meet. We live a life that is like nothing else I could ever imagine. We live a life that is a once-in-a-lifetime experience and one that I am truly privileged to live. I take my hat off to those who have served before me, to those who serve in other levels of government or who have served in the past. Mostly, I extend my hand in friendship to those I have the pleasure to serve with from all parties in this hallowed Legislature. I commit to working with you to make a difference.

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A special thank you and oath of allegiance to those people in my PC caucus, my colleagues, my friends. You are truly special people, and I am honoured and humbled to serve alongside you and to learn from you.

As a call to action, a "walking the walk," if you will, I challenge everyone to step up and be part of the solution, if you were to criticize; to be positive and help others—do at least one good deed every day of your life; be proud of your community, province and country; and vote as your way of saying thank you to those who made the ultimate sacrifice so we could enjoy the rights, freedoms, liberties, and the privilege of democracy and right to vote and speak freely in this wonderful province of Ontario and the country of Canada.

In closing, it is my hope that I have been able to communicate that I am truly privileged and honoured to be an elected member of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, the greatest province in the greatest country in the world. I love my job, and I will continue to pursue it with the most integrity, energy and passion that I can. It is certainly a job that is learned on the fly, and I will continue to put my best foot forward and perform my role with class and dignity. It is my hope that the wonderful people of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound will be proud of the effort I am making on their behalf, are proud

to call me their MPP, and that in some small way I am making a positive difference in their lives.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes my maiden speech. However, I will take a few moments to also address the speech from the throne, if I may.

One of the concerns, I believe, of the caucus when the election started was where this government, the Liberal government, has taken us. They've doubled the debt in eight years; the deficit is \$13.5 billion more than we take in in a year. Every single dollar that we spend on interest payments because of that debt, that overspending continually, is not a dollar that goes to our front-line health care. It doesn't go to our schools. It does not go to the needy and the homeless. It does not go to people with special-needs children. Almost every day in my office, someone comes in with a heart-wrenching story of their child, their sibling, their family member, and all of my colleagues share the same experience. It's saddening to say that there's not a whole lot of hope on the way, because right now our third-largest expenditure in government is our interest payment on the debt. Mr. Speaker, \$10.5 billion a year goes to spending money on interest payments.

This throne speech continues down the same path. It continues down the same overspending ways that we've watched here for my two and a half years and, sadly, for the 11 years they were here. Spending continues to go up, even though economist Don Drummond, their own specialist, their own economist who they hired to report to them two years ago, is telling them that they have to change their ways.

I didn't hear anything in there, although it says more money for hospitals. Today in the House, I offered once again to the Minister of Health to step up and put a commitment to the Markdale hospital. Some 11 years ago they committed to building that hospital, and they have still not come through on that commitment. The great people of Markdale have raised \$13.2 million, and it's sitting there in a bank doing absolutely nothing. It's not helping the great people of our community. It's not providing the health care that they deserve and were committed to. I hope the minister was very frank in his thought process to me, in his remarks and in his rebuttal, and that he will work with me and he will meet with me to find a way to move this forward.

I also have a program in my riding: the Georgian College marine emergency duty training facility. As the colleague from Cambridge mentioned, in Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound we live in one of the most beautiful parts of our wonderful province, surrounded by the Great Lakes. We have Georgian College, with one of the most state-of-the-art simulators in the country. They're divesting this program at the federal level, and it only makes common sense to bring that to Owen Sound, where we are the Marine Centre of Excellence. This would ensure that jobs remain in Ontario. This will ensure that the marine industry is served well in Ontario. There are similar programs on the east coast and the west coast, but my concern is that if they start going there for the

training, they'll eventually start to move all of their business there, and this is a huge industry for Ontario.

They talk about education. The Liberals want to be known as the education party. Well, here's an educational institution that certainly can be the sustainability and vibrancy of this whole marine sector. Again, I reached out to Minister Duguid today. He agreed to meet with me and have his staff meet with me to try to move this forward. Those are the types of things I want to see in the budget, but what I saw more was overspending. I saw a lot of discussion about where they want to take us. They said all the buzz words that are wonderful—"hope" and "opportunity"—but what we need is some social sense. Like the Bill Davis years, we need to have fiscal responsibility. We need to not spend more than we currently bring in in revenue. Those pages sitting in front of you, my children and, hopefully someday, grandchildren, are who we're borrowing from today to make promises today to get elected today and to remain in office today. That's not the way we need to be going. It's not why the 107 people, I believe, came to this hallowed House, Mr. Speaker.

We need to show that progressive fiscal responsibility, along with a social conscience, obviously. But when we're spending almost \$11 billion on interest payments which is not going, as I mentioned earlier, to help front-line health care, front-line education, then we're not helping the disabled, and we're not helping those who are without, Mr. Speaker. I didn't see a lot of that in the budget, and I think we really need to focus on that third-biggest expenditure being debt and interest payments. It needs to be broken; it needs to be changed. They're going in the wrong direction, and they need to step forward with a better plan. They're going to introduce the exact same budget.

I don't even have time to get into the pension that small businesses are telling me is probably going to put them out of business if they truly fully go forward and implement this. We've heard it from the economists. We heard it at the front door when I was campaigning. This is just another added burden of tax that is going to decimate not only the employee but the employer.

The throne speech has some merit. There were some things in there, but I think, at the end of the day, we need a big change, and the government needs to address its overspending ways.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By the way, congratulations on your nomination for that role. You'll enjoy it, and you will learn the names. Congratulations.

To the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, I was struck that this is your maiden speech because it seems like you've been here forever already. Anyway, congratulations on having made it. It's wonderful. It's always good to hear about a member's family, about their roots and about their motivations. I think often we don't see ourselves here in this House as full human beings,

and it's wonderful to hear members get up and talk about themselves a little bit.

Congratulations to all of the new members who have been elected. It's a wonderful privilege to be here. I'm no maiden; it's my fourth time elected in eight years of service. But I have to say, every time one stands in this House, one is aware of the huge number of people who sent us here, those who voted for us and those who didn't vote for us but who we still represent, those who exercised their franchise. It's really important to acknowledge them, and I think the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound did exactly that.

It's also important to recognize our family. I want to give a shout-out to my family too, to Gil, my husband; to Damien and Francesca, my children—all of whom worked on my campaign night and day. I'm sure I'm not alone in this. Our families turned up. They did the phones, and they knocked on doors. We had family canvass on Sundays in my household. Particularly to my husband, and I know he's watching, I just want to say, I love you, and thank you for all your support. Thank you for your love, and thank you for your hard work and belief in me.

That's what we also heard from the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, because none of us would be here without family support. That's the core of who we are. Bringing their voices and names forward is so important, just to acknowledge their role in our lives, because really, when we're elected, they're elected too.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It's my pleasure once again to rise to offer a couple of comments to the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. I must say you had my 100% attention for three quarters of your speech, and then you referred to PC notes, and that kind of threw me off-kilter.

But let me first say, congratulations. I'm of the same belief as you are: I truly believe that all 107 of us who are here are here for the right reasons. We might have some different philosophies, but that's what makes it interesting, and I think it's fantastic.

Your part about families: I spoke yesterday for some half hour or so, and family is very important. They sacrifice a lot to allow us to serve Ontario, so it's real teamwork.

I think that's a message that sometimes, frankly, the public doesn't quite understand. They think that we come here, we sit here and then we collect a big fat pension at the end of the day. But having said that, we made that choice to be here. We know what the conditions were. We accept it, and I think we're all honoured to be here. So to you, Bill, your family and your riding, congratulations. I'm sure they'll enjoy you being here.

1700

I must say one thing; I'm going to comment on the last four or five minutes of your speech. You talk about needing some issues addressed in your riding. I think everybody in this House needs that. You say you need it; it's got to happen. But on the other hand, you talk about

austerity, and I'm not sure things mesh. You can't talk from both sides of one's mouth, so although we all need those services and those needs—but at the end of the day, congratulations. I enjoy being here with you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm pleased to comment on what I as well was surprised to hear was the maiden speech from my friend from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, who has been with us since 2011 and has spoken on many, many, many occasions, on different bills. I just kind of assumed that one of those was his maiden speech, but I'm pleased I had an opportunity to be here for what is officially your maiden speech. It's a big day for every one of us.

I can remember mine, which took place back in 2003, something that you look forward to for a long time. Having followed my father to this chamber, it was indeed a kind of changing of the guard, if you want to call it that, for me as well at that time.

I'll say that Bill hit on all the right points. He understands why he's here. He's not too big for his britches. He understands humility, who put him here and who he is here to serve. I think that's the best lesson you can remind us all of from time to time: who puts us here and who we're here to serve. It is, in fact, the constituents that we are here to serve.

Again, his shout-out to his family: There is not any one of us here who could do the job, or indeed have gotten here to do the job, without the help of our families, in one way or another, in whatever form that family is. I know in my case it was paramount for me to have the support of my wife and our children in my ability to seek this office and ultimately be successful in attaining it.

Again, Bill talked about the importance of his riding, a little bit of history. He touched on all of the things that I think make that day of your maiden speech special. It is something that I can assure you, while it took a long time getting to it, you will look back on. You will have copies of this, you will distribute them to your friends and you will remember this for a long, long time, because I expect that Bill Walker is going to be here for a long, long time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments.

Mr. Joe Cimino: I'll also share my words of congratulations and thank you for those words to the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. It's very good to stand up and learn a little bit about each of us, because we are more than just a riding name. We're more than just a chair or a seat on one end of the chamber or another. When we talk about ourselves, whether it's in here, outside or downstairs for a coffee, I think we all appreciate each other's differences and respect each other's viewpoints, to a point, regardless of political colours.

I think it's important that we remember that we are all here for the same reason, as has been stated several times. We are all human beings who have families at home, who have desires for our ridings, who have ambitions in terms of making sure that we leave the riding

better off than the way we received it. That is always my philosophy, and I've been taught that that goes back to a famous book. We won't get into it, but when you receive something, make sure you return it back better than when you received it in the first place.

I can see your dedication and your enthusiasm. Even though it has taken you a while to do this inaugural speech—I'm sure it was written two and a half years ago; you just didn't have time to do it. I thank you for your comments and I hope to talk to you soon outside the chamber and get to know you a little bit better.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I return to the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound for his final response.

Mr. Bill Walker: To the members from Parkdale–High Park, Sudbury, Northumberland–Quinte West and of course my good colleague John from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, and to all the people who were here today—it's special to have some of the other colleagues here being able to hear my inaugural speech.

Cheri, when you say that it seems like I've been here forever, I hope that's not in a bad way. I'm sure some of the Clerks that have to record me all the time may feel that way as well. I think last year my record was 86,000 words spoken in the chamber, so it does probably seem a little strange, Mr. Speaker, that I would be doing this maiden speech now.

But I do truly believe that it is important to do it, and it's to pay homage to those who have made my life, who have allowed me the opportunity and privilege to be here today.

It's important to say thank you to the constituents who have shown faith in me and continued, in my second election, to have shown faith and trust in me.

I think it's important especially—and all of my colleagues have talked about family. I believe in sharing—I think you might have been the person who said it—that when we get elected, the family gets elected. This isn't a one-person show in regards to any of us. If I didn't have my wife, Michaela, and the support of my sons, Zach and Ben, and my family, my extended family, my siblings, certainly I couldn't do this. This is all-encompassing, and it's a privilege to do this job. I thoroughly enjoy every single moment that I'm out in my job, that I'm doing my job, but it truly is sacrificial from the point of family, as all of us in this House know.

I think it's important to put on record why we are here and to remind ourselves. John, again, has a very special situation, to follow his father into this hallowed hall. I can only imagine what his speech would have been back in the day. I will go back through Hansard and read that, because I think it will be entertaining, as all of his speeches are.

But I think that at the end of the day it's important for us to take time and to put our mark on this House, as this House puts its mark on all of us. We all truly are here with different thought processes, different views of the world, but that's the democracy that we have a right and a privilege to enjoy.

Thank you to everyone. It's my pleasure to serve, and hopefully for many years to come. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the member from Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Very good. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Again, it's a delight to stand. I left a few people off the list of thank yous in that two-minute hit. I also want to extend a welcome to all my colleagues, the returning colleagues as well. Welcome back. Good to see you again.

To my staff, Bhutla, Carly, Susan and Ram—phenomenal staff—I couldn't do it without them.

And to our leaders—I don't think they've been acknowledged—to the member from Simcoe–Grey, to our own Andrea Horwath, to the Premier: Again, congratulations on your election and to your leadership positions. I have the privilege of being the first LGBTQ critic for any party at Queen's Park, and so I just have to acknowledge, as we've just come out of World Pride in Toronto, the first openly gay Premier as well. I have to acknowledge that; that is a moment in history.

And now to the throne speech; now to the throne speech. What I'm going to say is absolutely, utterly inspired by my members from Parkdale–High Park: what I heard at the door, what I spoke to people about. Really, I'm tasked with bringing their voices forward. That's who elected me—and, of course, others in Ontario who feel the same way.

Let me say first and foremost that there's a problem. We have a problem in this province, and that problem has many faces.

It first of all has the faces of those who are marginalized, those who live in poverty. My friends opposite and next to us should know that food bank usage is way up, and that is a pretty good measure, Mr. Speaker, of poverty. We have over a million people using food banks now. Back in 2003, when this government was first elected, we had around 700,000. That's a significant increase. That is an increase in poverty rates. And those people who live in poverty have real faces. I met them; I met them at the door.

A problem they also have is housing. We have over 150,000 families—not just individuals—waiting for affordable housing in this province, over 70,000 families in the GTA alone. I met those people. They had a hard time even exercising their franchise because many of them lacked sufficient identification. We have a problem there, and it's a problem that has solutions, that could have been solved in the last 11 years. One of those solutions, we put forward several times. It's called inclusionary zoning, and I tabled that bill again, Mr. Speaker. It's a very simple little bill. All it does is make a small change to the Planning Act so that municipalities who have overwhelmingly told me they want this ability can then require of their developers and developments that they set aside a certain amount of units for affordable housing. It could be rent-to-own. It could look differently in different municipalities.

1710

I have to give kudos to Olivia Chow who is running for the mayoral position in Toronto right now for talking about using section 37. But she has also acknowledged, and others, that they need more tools in the tool box in cities and municipalities to be able to address this.

I see my new minister, for whom I am a new critic on the housing file, and I look forward to speaking to him about this very issue and seeing if we can move this forward, because we need to move this forward.

Mr. Speaker, it doesn't cost one tax dollar and yet we calculate, looking at the incredible development that has happened across Ontario in the last 11 years, that would provide about 12,000 to 13,000 new units of affordable housing every single day. But, of course, that's not enough. We also need new builds. Again, by their own reckoning, by their own standards, this government said they wanted to and were going to build 20,000 new units—not close, Mr. Speaker, not even close.

I see those faces. I see the faces of the homeless, and I see, more frequently, the faces of the under-housed, not to mention our children. Where will they live in the GTA, with the average price in the GTA now approaching \$600,000, \$700,000 or more? This is a situation that is leading to calamity unless it's addressed. Again, to the new Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, I hope that he and I can work on this together and make some changes, because we need to make those changes.

The other thing that we need to change where municipalities are concerned, certainly in Toronto—and this I heard at the door from many of my folk in ward 13 who are extremely concerned about rampant development where citizens have no say. Here's what happens: A citizens' group gets together; they oppose a new development for all sorts of good reasons—certainly sometimes there are good reasons. The developers often now bypass them completely, do not even hold meetings with citizens, go right to the Ontario Municipal Board and win there.

My friend Rosario Marchese who served in this House for 24 years—24 years Rosie was in the House—and made this one of the key pieces of his work here, to get the OMB out of Toronto planning. We do not need the OMB in Toronto planning. We have our own appeal process. We have our own planning process. I know other municipalities feel the same, but certainly Toronto feels dramatically that way.

You will see across my riding "Save Our Village" signs on people's lawns. Why do they put them there? Because of the development that's happening eerily close, frighteningly close, to one of our greatest natural resources in Parkdale-High Park, and that is High Park itself. People are concerned. They're concerned about the height. They're concerned about where the children in those buildings will go to school, because we do not have the infrastructure—schools—to accommodate those children.

Let's talk about education for a minute. We have the highest student debt per capita of any province in all of

Canada. We have the highest student debt per capita of any province across Canada and we have among the highest tuition fees ever. This is again a nightmare for young people, particularly young people, who then go into the job market where there are no jobs, carrying massive debts the size of mortgages, many of them. We need to address that fact and the fact that we are 10 out of 10 in terms of our record on education.

But to get back to the development issue: The young children who are being raised in apartments now in downtown Toronto, because that's all most people can afford, don't have a place to go to school in my riding. They have to be bused out of my riding half the time just to find a place in a classroom. I'll tell you, when I first ran eight years ago, one of the issues was that this government was going to close Warren Park school and King George school in my riding, because they were under-enrolled—this takes us back to the funding formula, which really has not changed since the Mike Harris days. So they were going to close these two schools. Mr. Speaker, those schools are overflowing now with students. In fact, every single school in my riding now is packed. Kids are taking classes in gyms. We have to bus students out of my riding to be able find a spot. This is a problem, and it's particularly a problem when you look at the throne speech and the budget it's based on and see that the government's answer, if there is one in there, is to sell schools—schools that are under-enrolled. Well, I say to those communities where schools are on the chopping block—because it's one of the resources they're looking at in this budget: Stand up. Fight back. Because if you do and if you win, you will be glad.

We all know there are demographic blips and troughs. There are changes. Many of us are from the baby boom era, but then there was the baby bust era. We cannot sell off our precious public resources, like schools and, of course, like you heard in question period today, potentially the LCBO, OPG, Hydro One. But let's focus on schools for a minute. Had those schools in my riding been shut, I don't know what we would be doing, because already we have a problem. That's education.

Let's talk about child care. We are bordered by two provinces: Quebec, which has \$7-a-day child care, and Manitoba, which has \$17-a-day child care. Here we are in Ontario, where only one in 8 to 10 children has a space, and those spaces cost upwards of \$1,000 or more a month. I can tell you, I heard that voice at the door during this last election, and they said, "We need a child care program." It's desperately needed. In fact, I would say it's the critical feminist issue of this province, because you can't have full equality of women if you don't have good, high-quality, affordable child care, available to every woman who needs it. That's essential, and we don't have that. But we're bordered by neighbours who really do have that, so we can do way better—and that's after 11 years.

What about transportation? One of the huge issues I heard in Parkdale-High Park was transportation. First

and foremost, I heard about the air-rail link. This is nothing new. Members have heard me speak about this ad infinitum, over years and years. Jonah Schein, the member who served for Davenport, introduced a bill which I re-tabled just now, that that line connecting Pearson and Union Station has to be electric. Why? Because it's a health risk to all of those who live near the tracks it runs on.

We know this. Studies have been done. The environmental assessment is there for all to read. It has to be electric. It is literally running past the backyards of many of our citizens, and the citizens of Davenport, and the citizens of Trinity-Spadina, and the citizens of York South-Weston. For all of these ridings, this is a huge issue. Again, I look forward to meeting with the new transportation minister—I've already asked for a meeting—to talk about electrification. We need more than a promise. We don't even have that, but we need more than that. We need a plan. We need a budget. We heard from the last transportation minister that, "Oh, this will be done in 2017." But even then, we haven't seen a plan. We haven't seen a budget. We haven't seen anything tabled. We need that plan. We need that budget. We need action on that file. We need it soon, because in 2015 those trains start to roll for the Pan Am Games. I was sent here to say on behalf of all of my residents that a two-week sporting event is not enough reason to destroy their quality of life and their health. We've heard about asthma rates in schools—something like 20% now. Well, I can tell you that those asthma rates will go up when those diesel trains start to run.

Again, that's the biggest transportation issue in my riding, but there are others. If you wait for the streetcar on Queen Street, you will be waiting quite a while if you wait in rush hour, Mr. Speaker. You will see sometimes one or two cars go past; they're packed. If you try to get on the subway, you'll have the same experience; it's packed too.

I tabled a question for the transportation minister. I want to know where that so-called \$29 billion they're putting in transportation is going, how it's being spent, when it's being spent and on what, because I can tell you that we need a relief line in downtown Toronto. It's critical.

We need more buses on the road, too—again, something that Olivia has talked about. We need both. We need a full package and a full focus on how to move people. It is costing us billions not to move those people in downtown Toronto and in Parkdale-High Park. These are critical issues for us—absolutely critical.

1720

One issue I haven't heard talked about yet but is also something I heard at the door from our activist folk in Parkdale-High Park—and we are activists—was, "Whatever happened to the move to get rid of that regulation that caused all the problems with the G20?" Remember the G20? Remember the nightmare of that? Remember the absolutely undemocratic move of this government, Mr. Speaker, when, behind closed doors when the House

was in full session, in cabinet, they invoked a secret regulation nobody knew about, dusted it off from the Second World War to put it in place, that had disastrous results for civil liberties in our city? It had disastrous results for civil liberties in Parkdale-High Park. It's sad to say that I had to say to those people who raised that issue with me, "Nothing has been done. Nothing has changed." Now, that's sad because that's just a regulation. Nothing has been done. That was a while back, Mr. Speaker. Nothing has been done.

Long-term care: You've already heard members speak about long-term care, the huge wait-lists, the problem with getting a bed in long-term care. But more to the point, Donna Cansfield, who was here, introduced a bill—I co-sponsored it with her, so did Christine Elliott—calling for at least a strategy to look at those who are aging and who have dementia and Alzheimer's. We need to confront this issue. We need to do something. We need a strategy; we need policies in place. Otherwise this, too, is a calamity waiting to happen. I heard about it when I met those faces at the door, and I heard about it during this election campaign.

Again, we need to talk about the amount of service people in long-term-care homes get and the amount of funding that goes per bed in those homes. I also heard that we have overworked staff who just can't get around to provide the services needed. When I was first elected eight years ago, I was speaking about this. We were speaking about the fact that we need at least 3 hours—3.5 hours I think was the amount asked for—per long-term-care resident per day, and instead, we still have less than three. Again eight years later, still no action on that; this is a problem.

Labour: Our labour critic has introduced some excellent bills. We have, over the eight years, bills that have not seen the light of day here: anti-scab legislation, card-check certification legislation. Again, there's nothing to address those core concerns of those in organized labour. Let's be frank: If it weren't for those in organized labour working hard, we wouldn't have the civil liberties that we have, going back to that G20 moment. They have always been at the forefront of the changes that we have needed. We need to look at how we can unionize more—not as my friends to the right want, to unionize less, but to unionize more. That's what we should be looking at. That's critical.

We saw again, in the history of this government, Bill 115, which took away the collective bargaining rights of teachers. We saw the EllisDon bill, which took away the collective bargaining rights of trades. Again, there's nothing progressive about that. We need to see action on those files as well.

I only have a few minutes left and a lot to say. But let's just sum up by saying this: There are very different ways of looking at an economy. There's a way that we used to call the trickle-down theory, where you put lots of money into big corporations and multinationals, and you hope that somehow that trickles down and results in jobs on the front line—somehow. Or you can look at

investing where people need it, and that's what I've been speaking about, Mr. Speaker: investing to combat those who live on the margins, to find jobs, to provide housing, to have education and to provide health care—by the way, shout-outs to the Ontario Health Coalition, who came here and talked about the increasing spate of privatization and the delisting that has happened under the government: for eye care, for ambulances, for physio. I could go on, but anyway.

That's where we need to put our money: health care, education, housing, poverty elimination, child care, long-term care. That's where we need to put our focus.

We need to look at those multinationals and those large corporations that do not pay their fair share. There's nothing progressive about not looking at the corporate tax rate—nothing progressive about that at all.

Finally, one of the most frustrating bits of messaging I've heard out of the Liberal Party and this government, of all of them, is this proud crowing—I've heard it now also from the Progressive Conservatives, who have debunked it in other ways—that we spend less per capita on all social programming for our citizens than any other province. I think that's cause for shame. I think it's cause for shame that we spend less on education, on poverty elimination, on housing, on child care, on long-term care and on transportation. That we spend less for each one of our citizens than anyone else in Canada I don't think is something to be proud about, Mr. Speaker. I think it's something to be ashamed about, particularly when we live in one of the richest jurisdictions in the world and when people need support and when those infrastructure investments actually produce wealth—because that's the other way of looking at the economy.

Again, I'm proud to stand here. It's great to be back. Welcome, everybody. We've got some serious work to do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments.

Mr. John Fraser: I would like to congratulate the member from Parkdale–High Park on her re-election and for her comments today. I know that she's a strong advocate for her community and a strong voice for issues around poverty. I know that from speaking to the former Minister of Community and Social Services and current Minister of Municipal Affairs about how strong a voice you are. Although I may not always agree with you—and that's what this place is all about—I know that your words are sincere and honourable.

You will remember that there is a commitment in the throne speech to introduce a new poverty reduction strategy within 60 days. I think that's important to note.

I think it's also important to take a look at our budget. I want to thank you for not using the term “Trojan Horse.” The last Trojan Horse I remember was in 2003, and a certain party was trailing it around to different campaign offices. I remember getting my picture taken with it.

You'll remember that we have raises for PSWs, people who care for the people we care for most. We

have a large investment in developmental services, which will help to eliminate wait-lists for families who so badly need those services. We're also looking towards people's retirement security. We're investing in people. We're continuing the 30%-off tuition grant.

As members, we can all agree that our job here is to make sure that those things that we do for each other—like hospitals, schools, public transit, protecting the most vulnerable—are there in reasonable measure for everyone and that we can sustain that. That's a very difficult balance to make sometimes, and that's why we have these debates here.

I want to thank you again for your remarks and for your strong advocacy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments.

Mr. John Yakubuski: It's a pleasure to comment on the address today by the member from Parkdale–High Park. The member from Parkdale–High Park and I get along very well. I've never quite understood that because on a philosophical basis, we don't agree on very many things. We've had this discussion. When it comes to how she would run the province versus how I would run the province, ne'er the twain shall meet, and yet on a personal basis, we get along very well.

The one thing I can always be completely honest about about the member from Parkdale–High Park is the passion that she exudes in this place for the causes and the things that she believes in. There are few members who speak with such strength about social issues as the member from Parkdale–High Park. However, on some of those issues, that's where she and I part, because I have a social conscience, but I'm very fiscally conservative, and I just don't understand how we can possibly spend, spend, spend and still solve the big problem, and that is, if we don't solve the fiscal problems in Ontario, we won't have any money to spend someday. Not just the spending that some people may want us to do today on this particular issue or that particular issue, but we're not going to have any money, Speaker, because the province is going to be broke. And therein lies the challenge that faces the government.

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I can't believe two minutes goes by so quick.

They've got a tiger by the tail here right now, because they talk about—the member from Northumberland–Quinte West talked about having it both ways. That's exactly what the government thinks they're going to do, is have it both ways. It doesn't work that way. This is the real world.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to rise in response to the eloquent delivery of the response to the throne speech by our colleague the member from Parkdale–High Park, who clearly identifies quite poignantly some of the fundamental shortfalls of the throne speech and, of course, of the budget that we anticipate being delivered. It's because she is so poignant that I think we in this

House listen to her explicitly. She not only offers a clear perspective on the problems that we face in the province, specifically in her riding, but also remedies that we should all listen to and heed, and things that I don't see as wasteful spending or potentially expensive measures; they are value-added measures. When you do invest in child care, you aid productivity in the province of Ontario. When you invest in a publicly funded health care system, that is good value for dollars. When you invest in transit to move people around the wonderful city and the GTA, again those are good dollars spent.

We question, I think, the priorities of the government and she nailed it at the end as she concluded. She hit the nail on the head when she said that it boggles our minds, on this side of the House, that the government boasts of being the lowest per capita spenders in the country when it comes to delivery of public services. Those are incredible metrics, because you would anticipate that they would have money in the bank and not such a massive deficit. So those two equations don't make sense to myself. It certainly doesn't make sense to the general public. All the more reason to ask the hard questions of this government, how they intend to continue to provide the public services that we all are passionate about. Certainly the member from Parkdale-High Park exudes that passion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Granville Anderson: It's a pleasure and a great privilege to serve the people of the great riding of Durham. I've listened, and it would be remiss of me if I didn't mention the speech from my colleague from Cambridge and the speeches, as well, from the members from Sudbury and Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. An excellent speech—and as the member from Northumberland-Quinte West said, the speech was okay until we got to the Tory talking points, which baffled me a bit. He was doing so well—but then he ended by saying he had a social conscience, which is good to see, a Conservative with a social conscience. That's always wonderful to know. I think he's a good man at heart.

Back to the member from High Park, who just spoke, I wondered during her speech if she had looked at the budget, or if she's on the same page with her leader, because a lot of the things she spoke about were in that budget that was defeated both by the Conservatives and the NDP. So that had me a bit puzzled for a minute. I do share one thing with her: I belong to a food bank and I agree that there are too many of them and it's something that we need to tackle: poverty, poverty among young children. It's something I'm passionate about. So I agree with her that it's something that this government is going to work hard to eradicate, as much as possible. I'm sure we'll look to the other side and to the members across the aisle for their support in doing so.

Again, thank you for your speech. At least it sounded more like you're an NDPer. Thanks again.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I return to the member for her final response.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Thank you to all the members. I'm going to start with the member from Durham: Welcome. I want to say simply that Dr. Phil-ism: The best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour. Eleven years of past behaviour is what I'm dealing with here and what reality is, quite frankly. The rest is dreams, we hope.

To the member from Essex, absolutely. We need to invest. That's the critical thing. I had a business as one of my former careers, and I can tell you that any business person will tell you, you start by putting money out and then you see the return come back. Without the investment, no business. That's how business works and that's where, of course, I would disagree with my other friend from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, who, yes, we call him Miracle Whip.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Miracle Whip?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Yes. I used to be Cool Whip, but no longer.

To Miracle Whip, I would have to say the same, that yes, you invest to see a return. But, absolutely, you have to talk about where the taxation isn't fair, and I did that by talking about looking at the top first rather than the bottom first.

Ottawa South: It's not working. Eleven years; it's not working. Poverty rates, by the food bank, "are up." It's not working.

We have the highest per capita debt in our school system. It's not working.

As I say, we live in hope in this place, or we wouldn't be here. We're all here, I think, for the right reasons—perhaps with the wrong ideologies, I would argue, but with the right reasons. We want to make a positive difference in the lives of those we represent and the lives of all Ontarians. So I would say to my friends, thank you for your comments. We live in hope. Let's see you do what you promised. We've been waiting 11 years.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? The member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore.

Mr. Peter Z. Mileczyn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise for the first time in this chamber, this beautiful place, as the Speaker has described it, and I congratulate you on your election to your position, which you will distinguish yourself in, I'm sure.

I want to congratulate all of my colleagues on all sides of the House for their election, and those hundreds of our fellow citizens who also put their names on the ballot this past June. It is truly a humbling experience to be standing in this chamber, knowing you've been selected by your neighbours, your fellow citizens, to represent them.

Mr. Speaker, before I speak about how we're going to be building Ontario up, I do want to take this opportunity to first of all thank the great people of Etobicoke-Lakeshore for putting their trust in me to be their MPP. Over close to 20 years in different capacities, those very same people elected me to be their representative on city council, first in the city of Etobicoke and subsequently in the city of Toronto. So I'm very grateful to them that I have exercised my duty to them relatively well, that they

felt confident that they could give me this additional trust and this additional opportunity to represent them.

I also want to mention my two immediate predecessors from Etobicoke–Lakeshore. First, Laurel Broten, who was an extremely kind and compassionate member who represented Etobicoke–Lakeshore with great distinction in this House. I also want to thank my immediate predecessor, Doug Holyday. Though Doug and I may have often sparred on different things, back in November 1994 when I was first elected to Etobicoke council, Doug Holyday was elected mayor. He had already been an elected official before; it was my first time as an elected official. Even though we sometimes disagreed back then too, I did learn a great deal from him, certainly when it comes to looking after taxpayers' money, which is something that I've always done in my role as a city councillor. I'm proud to be part of a government that will continue looking after taxpayers' money carefully.

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I also want to speak about the wonderful volunteers who assisted me, not in one election, but in two, because unlike many of you, perhaps, to get to this place, my campaign was two campaigns in less than one year. I was blessed last summer with many hundreds of volunteers and this past June with somewhat fewer volunteers but no less enthusiastic.

I did want to mention some of the names of those who were the most supportive and came out the most often with me: Bob Stewart; Jean-Luc Marcheseau; Phillis Steren; Nik Bulatovich; Andrew Misiak; John O'Sullivan; Paul Capranos; Dean Walker, my riding association president who is the first deaf person who is a riding association president in the Liberal Party of Ontario; Adam Feldman; Glen Howell; Cassandra Steele; George Takach; Barbara Anderson; Susan Watt; Ken Mangat; Susan Kuzman; and Tanya Kuzman. There were, of course, many hundreds of others. I can't thank them all, but I am forever in your gratitude.

Of course I do want to thank my family: my beautiful wife, Rose, who has an incredibly challenging career of her own, but she always makes the time to help me and to support our family; and my darling daughter, Ariana, who just turned five not long ago. In her lifetime, she's had to experience her father running in three elections: one municipal and now two provincial. She is the apple of my eye, the light of my life, and I try my best to explain to her that when daddy is not around very much, it's because I'm trying to make this place better for her, and I will try to do that for her and for all the other children in Ontario and all the other citizens of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank my parents, Maria and Wes Milczyn, who were immigrants from Communist Poland to this country. When they first arrived here, they settled in Montreal. After a few years, they saw that the place of opportunity was in Ontario, and they moved here with their unborn son. I have to think that with that singular decision they could never have imagined that today I would be standing here.

I was first elected when I was 29, so of course my parents were very big parts of those campaigns. This past summer, I was knocking on doors in Mimico, where I grew up, which is part of my riding, and people were saying, "I remember when your mom knocked on our doors 20 years ago." My grandmother also knocked on some of their doors, but perhaps they didn't remember that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I stand here having lived my entire life in Etobicoke–Lakeshore, growing up in the town of Mimico, living in the village of Islington and now in the beautiful, leafy neighbourhood of Sunnylea. These places are in my marrow. I am so grateful to be representing my neighbours from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, and I will always strive to ensure that the trust you've placed in me—that I will come through for you.

In my political career, as in my professional career—I studied architecture—I like to conceive things. I like to then see them implemented and see them through to completion. When I was five years old growing up in Mimico, the debate about the development of the motel strip began. I wondered, "What's taking so long? That's really cool. I think I'd like to be an architect." Lo and behold, I graduated from U of T with my architecture degree.

As a city councillor for ward 2, Mimico and New Toronto, I spearheaded the beginning of the redevelopment of that area, also known as Humber Bay Shores now. Later on, as an Etobicoke councillor, we had the derelict Ontario hospital at the foot of Kipling in the ward, which we transformed into the great Humber College campus, but there was one building, the Assembly Hall, that was sitting vacant. My thesis at university for architecture was an arts centre on those grounds. Just five years later, as a city councillor, I led Etobicoke council in ensuring that that Assembly Hall was renovated and expanded, and a community arts facility was built there.

In my latest incarnation in politics, on Toronto council, the project that I worked on for the entire 14 years that I was there was the redevelopment of the Etobicoke City Centre, 16 acres of vacant land marked in the middle by a highway interchange but where no highways were, just regular city streets. That was 1950s planning. After 14 years of consultation, planning, studies, and begging and pleading council to allocate money, construction on that will begin this year, Mr. Speaker.

I've been proud to be a city builder in my first political career, and now I'm proud to be part of a government that will be building Ontario up and that will be province builders, Mr. Speaker.

Of course, in the speech from the throne there are many issues that have been raised that are extremely important to the future of this province. I want to start with one, though: education. Over the past year of campaigning, I often heard that full-day kindergarten is not a good way to spend money. I sometimes heard that it was a waste of money. "Wasting money" on my daughter's education and the education of every other young

child in this province—that is not a waste of money, Mr. Speaker. Ensuring that our children have the best education system that they can have and that, as they move through the school system leading into post-secondary education, we give them the education, the tools and the opportunities that they so richly deserve, is never a waste of money, Mr. Speaker. This government is committed to ensuring that that education, from early childhood education through to post-secondary education, will be of the highest quality and will also be affordable for young people with post-secondary education, but also in terms of creating employment opportunities for their families so that young families can afford to get back into the workforce earlier. That is a very important part of this throne speech and this government's mandate that we will follow through on.

Of course, the aspects of the throne speech that people might logically assume I'm going to speak more about are issues like transit and infrastructure. I'm very grateful to the Premier for appointing me as the parliamentary assistant to the Honourable Brad Duguid, the Minister of Infrastructure, because that is a role in which I think I can contribute a great deal to this government and to this province.

Le gouvernement affectera une nouvelle somme de 29 milliards de dollars à la stratégie sur 10 ans relative au transport et au transport en commun Faire progresser l'Ontario qui créera des emplois et stimulera notre économie dès maintenant et dans l'avenir. Dans le cadre de cette stratégie, un montant pouvant aller jusqu'à 15 milliards de dollars sera alloué de façon transparente à des projets de la région du grand Toronto et de Hamilton, et près de 14 milliards de dollars seront consacrés à des projets menés à d'autres endroits de la province où la croissance repose sur la circulation garantie des gens et des marchandises.

Mr. Speaker, in this throne speech, our government is committing to the most significant investment in infrastructure in several generations in this province, the infrastructure that, as I was growing up, made this province a place of opportunity that my parents chose to move to. This infrastructure has been ignored to a degree that's unconscionable, and this government is committed to building it up once again.

For the residents of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, transit and infrastructure is one of the key issues that I heard about: the need to improve local transit services, regional transit services, highways, roads, bridges, water quality systems—all those elements that make a modern economy thrive.

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In my community, Mr. Speaker, this government is investing in a Kipling mobility hub to ensure that there's a seamless transition between Mississauga Transit, TTC and GO Transit in the heart of our Etobicoke city centre, which it is about to do. We are making improvements to the Mimico GO train station. We are committed to expanding GO rail service to 15 minutes all day long along the Lakeshore line and other lines throughout the

GTA. In my community, we're also very concerned about creating new regional rail stations, particularly in the Park Lawn–Humber Bay Shores area, to allow a thriving and growing community to have access to great transit. This government's plans to electrify the GO rail system will make that a possibility. I look forward to working with my municipal counterparts now on making sure that the development in that area allows those types of projects to proceed.

Mr. Speaker, this throne speech also talks a great deal about creating a better business climate and allowing the private sector to create the jobs that Ontarians need. In my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, we have a number of sectors which are really crucial to the economy. One is the film and TV production sector. Mr. Paul Bronfman, the owner of William F. White, which is the largest Canadian, and one of the largest international, film and TV equipment rental companies, is a great supporter of the initiatives of this government to promote the film and TV production industry in this city. The year 2012 was the banner year for that industry in the city of Toronto and in Ontario, 2013 was a close second and 2014 also looks very auspicious. That's because of the investments and partnerships that this government has created for that sector.

Another key sector in my riding, which many members might find unusual, perhaps, is actually the agri-food sector. Yes, Etobicoke–Lakeshore is in the middle of Toronto and the GTA, but we are home to the Ontario Food Terminal and we are home to dozens upon dozens of food warehousing and food processing and food product manufacturing companies. Our support and investments in that sector are crucial to the Toronto economy and to the provincial economy, and the partnerships that this government creates in the agri-food sector are crucial to moving us forward and will continue to move us forward so we have a sustainable province.

In terms of sustainability, Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud that this government has acknowledged climate change to the extent that we have a Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. For the residents of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, this is not an abstract point. During last summer's by-election, on July 8, there was a massive storm that literally hovered above Etobicoke–Lakeshore on that day, flooding some parts of my riding to the same extent as they were flooded by the infamous Hurricane Hazel in the 1950s. I observed people being carried out of their homes by brave firefighters on that night because of the flooding and the overflowing creeks and rivers in the community. While it's easy to say that was a freak storm, in December of last year we had an ice storm. Again, large parts of Toronto and large parts of Etobicoke–Lakeshore were profoundly affected by it. It is no longer a matter of scientific debate whether climate change exists, it's a reality; and this government is making investments to create a more sustainable energy sector and to provide support to municipalities to build the kind of infrastructure that will help us withstand the challenges of the decades ahead.

This government is also a very compassionate government that cares about improving health care, improving long-term care and providing more support for seniors to stay in their homes. This is a government that is also focused on making sure that those who provide essential services to the most vulnerable people in our province can make a living wage. I was shocked, as a citizen, that our party was the only party that came out strongly in favour of increases to the minimum wage when this government brought that forward. This government brought forward increases in pay for personal support workers—also very important. I know, from when my mother required that kind of service, how difficult it was to get and how caring those people were. They deserve to be treated well, and this government is going to make sure that they are.

It's also very important that this government is thinking in the long term, not just in a four-year election cycle. It's thinking about the retirement maybe not of me but of my daughter, by creating a pension fund that, really, our federal counterparts should assist us with—they have the CPP—but they choose not to. Under the leadership of Kathleen Wynne, which is real leadership—she is saying that Ontario will do the right thing for our citizens in generations to come. That is why we'll be implementing the Ontario pension plan, something that I'm very proud of, Mr. Speaker.

So this throne speech represents a vision of this province that is not abstract. It will impact the daily lives of residents across the province and of my neighbours in Etobicoke–Lakeshore immediately, by making those investments in infrastructure that are so badly needed; by helping to support job creation, and everybody agrees we need to do more to sustain that by doing it in a smart way through partnerships with the private sector; by supporting a strong education system; good health care; and supports for the most vulnerable people in our society.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that Etobicoke–Lakeshore is a microcosm of the province in many ways, and the way that this government's throne speech impacts Etobicoke–Lakeshore so positively, I am convinced it will impact every riding in this province positively. I look forward to getting to know parts of this province better as an MPP and to working with my colleagues from all parts of the province, finding out more about their problems and the solutions they want to come up with, whichever side of the aisle they come from.

Mr. Speaker, thank you, and I'm so proud to be a member of this House.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Since it is 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1758.

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Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
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Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
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Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	

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Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
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Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
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Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
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Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
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Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
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MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
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Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<p> Miller, Paul (NDP) Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB) Miller, Norm (PC) </p>	<p> Etobicoke–Lakeshore Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton–Est–Stoney Creek </p>	<p> Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative Minister of the Environment and Climate Change </p>
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
<p> Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB) Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB) Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB) </p>	<p> Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre Halton Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre </p>	<p> Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement </p>
<p> Natyshak, Taras (NDP) Nicholls, Rick (PC) Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB) </p>	<p> Essex Chatham–Kent–Essex Sault Ste. Marie </p>	<p> Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs </p>
<p> Pettapiece, Randy (PC) Potts, Arthur (LIB) Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) Rinaldi, Lou (LIB) Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB) Sattler, Peggy (NDP) Scott, Laurie (PC) Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB) </p>	<p> Perth–Wellington Beaches–East York Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord Northumberland–Quinte West Guelph London West / London-Ouest Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brook York West / York-Ouest </p>	<p> Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille </p>
<p> Singh, Jagmeet (NDP) Smith, Todd (PC) Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB) Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB) Taylor, Monique (NDP) Thompson, Lisa M. (PC) Vanthof, John (NDP) Vernile, Daiene (LIB) Walker, Bill (PC) Wilson, Jim (PC) Wong, Soo (LIB) Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB) </p>	<p> Bramalea–Gore–Malton Prince Edward–Hastings Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud Toronto–Danforth Mississauga–Erindale Hamilton Mountain Huron–Bruce Timiskaming–Cochrane Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound Simcoe–Grey Scarborough–Agincourt Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest </p>	<p> Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario </p>
<p> Yakabuski, John (PC) Yurek, Jeff (PC) Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB) </p>	<p> Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke Elgin–Middlesex–London Willowdale </p>	<p> Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones </p>

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**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

First Session, 41st Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 41^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 9 July 2014

Mercredi 9 juillet 2014

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 9 July 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 9 juillet 2014

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.
Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on July 8, 2014, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate? The member from Lanark-Lennox-Frontenac and Addington.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Very good; you're getting closer: Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington. Very good, Speaker.

I listened intently and with high expectations to the throne speech as it was delivered in this House last week. As usual, I came prepared with my notebook and pen, taking notes and recording my observations. But while listening to this throne speech it became apparent that something was very much different and askew, and I began to wonder if I had experienced a very different 2014 general election, for what I had heard in the throne speech bore little resemblance to what I saw and heard from the people in my riding.

First off, let me assure all members in the House that although I can be quite critical of the government, I've been equally critical of other parties, including my own, which I regard as a responsibility for all of us in this House—to be the public's watchdog.

Speaker, this election illustrates a great disservice that happened to the people of Ontario. While our economy sputters and leaves people with fewer and fewer economic opportunities, as a result, we see our sons and daughters leave this province in ever greater numbers each year for greener pastures out west or even to foreign lands; we have increasing difficulties in meeting our social assistance and health care commitments for our underemployed and aging population; and people are suffering under skyrocketing electricity costs and the rising cost of living. The cost of doing business in Ontario is a significant hardship to employers and workers alike. But there was very little mention of these real concerns or of how they will be remedied by this government in the throne speech.

We heard loud and clear through this election that while these economic and social ills concern a great number of people we represent, an even greater number of people are frustrated, troubled and loathing of a government that has exhibited an abundance of administrative incompetence and an immeasurable absence of interest in the oversight and accountability of our public administration.

I and many others also heard with clarity the disdain and anger over a government that has treated their tax dollars and the public trust with malfeasance, corruption and cover-up, but, Premier, you are indeed fortunate none of these were enough to topple—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington will withdraw the last two comments.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Continue.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Nonetheless, for reasons that are cause for great introspection on this side of the aisle, the Premier has been given a mandate. However, I would respectfully caution and remind the Premier that the mandate she has been given was not solely for her agenda, but a rejection of either of the opposition parties as a ready alternative.

So let me now offer the Premier a thoughtful and reasonable response to that unreasonable and fantastical throne speech that we heard. Let me deliver in this House my commitment to the people of Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, the people of rural and small-town Ontario and to all the people in Ontario.

The Premier said, in the throne speech, that voters have entrusted your government to be a full and active member in their communities and their lives. I did hear that people wanted to be full and active participants in our democracy, that they needed greater influence in the decisions of government. However, I heard no such clarion call for more government intervention in people's lives. Rather, I heard that government was often the largest obstacle to their prosperity, fully 180 degrees apart from the Premier's position.

I will, therefore, re-table legislation in this session to enable our citizens to remove dishonest or poor-performing politicians through a recall mechanism. I will table legislation to allow for plebiscites and referenda so that people can repeal, amend or modify your public policies that bring harm and injury to their lives, their businesses and their communities.

I will also bring legislation into this House so that individuals can bring forward and lodge complaints with the Integrity Commissioner on the conduct of members of this House. That is what the people of Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington told me in this election.

Speaker, the Premier, in the throne speech, quotes David Dodge and uses David Dodge as justification to continue the spendthrift ways and the use of the public credit card.

I will re-table legislation demanding that this House provide a full accounting and estimate of the cost of new legislation and policies of this government, and I will re-table amendments to the Taxpayer Protection Act and restrain the unquenchable thirst for public money, regardless of whether you call them taxes or revenue tools.

Once again, in the throne speech: “Your government will continue to manage spending wisely.” Does everybody remember that quote? You might better have said, “Your government will begin to spend money wisely.” That would be more reflective of the experiences of the Ontario taxpayer.

Therefore, I’ll table legislation this session that will give people tools to command this government to spend money wisely. This includes measures for full and transparent disclosure of government spending, including that of members, agencies, boards and commissions.

I will also table legislation that will reform our electoral financing laws so that unions, businesses, special interest groups and lobbyists will no longer be able to buy influence or legislation in this House. This bill will mirror the federal legislation which states that individuals must take precedence over organized financial influence in our democracy.

The Premier also mentioned, “Ontario’s conservation efforts and clean energy initiatives have moved our province down the road to a sustainable energy future.” That’s a quote from the throne speech. While she may think that her government’s efforts have led us to sustainability, the reality is that the government’s risky green energy schemes have done the exact opposite. Our hydro system is the furthest thing from sustainable, and much of that is the direct outcome of the burden the Green Energy Act has placed on our hydro rates and our infrastructure. And yet, instead of recognizing this like every other voter I met on the campaign trail, you have committed to expanding this disastrous program, ignoring the impact it is having on family budgets and businesses.

That’s why I will continue to advocate and fight for the repeal of the Green Energy Act and will continue to fight every day with every tool in our legislative tool box to have your government’s out-of-control hydro bureaucracy investigated, just as we’ve had with the Ombudsman, who’s already looking into Hydro One, and the Auditor General and the investigation into the gas plant fiasco.

0910

Last, but not least, from the throne speech: Our Treasury Board president will, “through action and deed, lead” oversight and accountability with “openness and modernization”—another quote.

Applause.

Mr. Harry Hillier: Clap for that one.

That announcement, that the Treasury Board president will be the former Minister of Health, whose oversight so well protected the taxpayer with Ornge and eHealth—that’s quite a position, quite a reward. I knew immediately that I must table legislation that is consistent with the desires and the expectations of my constituents and of the people of Ontario, and rooted in the fundamentals of a representative democracy. I will table legislation that will create grand juries who will have the express authority to investigate and inquire into those actions, deeds and expenditures of all taxpayer-funded ABCs and our provincially owned and operated institutions.

Premier, the appetite for reform in this province has been left unsated with this election. The thirst for truly representative government remains dry and parched. Reforms are needed; they’re warranted and justified, not just within your government, but within this Legislative Assembly. In that light, I will also reintroduce my reforms of the standing orders that put constituents first and empower local legislators, putting representation back into representative democracy.

In the spirit of fixing what we in this House have allowed to break, I hope I can count on the Premier’s full support of my efforts to get Ontario back on track.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. What a pleasure it is to see you in your finery there this morning, sir.

I arise for a couple of minutes to compliment my good friend next door from LFLA, Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, on his address. I thought he was going to go on for a while. Because of our Newfoundland roots, I’ve known him to go on for a while. I’m somewhat surprised that he gave up some of his time this morning.

The member was speaking about what he heard at the door during the election campaign, and I’ve heard somewhat similar. Since the election, in the stores and the Legion halls, I’ve heard other comments about the throne speech and the budget as well. In my part of the country, in what we lovingly call the great southwest, people still say there’s nothing in there to revitalize our local harness racing industry. As some of you know, it was a very vital industry. The province was given \$20 million a year and we had 2,000 people employed until, out of the blue, we lost our harness racing industry and the 2,000 jobs. Since then, we’ve been given 13 race dates, but it’s too little, too late, and we expect much more.

Also in the throne speech, in the budget, there’s nothing in there—if you want to cut down some of the health care costs, you can think about rebating for people, especially seniors, who sign up or register for pickleball or for yoga classes or physical activity. If you’re going to get people active and keep them out of the health care system, at least pay them back their registration fee. You’ll save money in the long run.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I actually want to echo the initial comments made by the member from Windsor—Tecumseh: It is fantastic to see you in the chair, as he said, in your finery.

I only have a little less than two minutes to respond to the comments, the debate on the throne speech from the member from Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington. It was interesting, as I did my best to listen closely to those remarks. This is the first chance that I've had to speak here in the chamber since the election, and I don't pretend to understand exactly what's in the minds of every single person living right across this province, so I wouldn't presume to tell that member opposite that I know better about what his constituents are telling him. What I can say is that I found it interesting to listen to his comments in the debate this morning because the lessons that he is drawing from what he may have heard over the course of the 35 days or so, during which we all had the opportunity to consult with our respective constituents, couldn't be further from the lessons that I drew from the experience that I had running for re-election in Vaughan.

What I heard from the people in my community and in the other ridings that I had the chance to visit over the course of those 35 days is that they were determined to see a government re-elected or elected that would work as hard as it possibly could to make those important investments in crucial public infrastructure, to work hard to build Ontario up, and to have a very balanced and responsible approach for moving the province forward. I think all of that stuff that we heard over the course of the campaign loudly and clearly from our constituents can be found very clearly in the throne speech itself.

I would encourage the member opposite, and all members on all sides of this House, to reflect a little bit about what they may have heard from their constituents, and to give very serious thought to how we can all work together to make sure that Ontario continues to be very prosperous, that it continues to be the best province in the greatest country in the world.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to see you not only return to Queen's Park but also to the chair.

It's a pleasure also to rise in support of my colleague from Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington. I thought he gave a very good speech about some reforms that need to occur not only through our election financing laws but perhaps with more transparency and accountability for elected members of this assembly. In particular, he talked about recall legislation. I want to thank him for bringing those refreshing views of reform to the assembly here today. I think it's important that we have those discussions.

I'd like to pick up, however, on something that I think all three members who have been in this debate in the past 20 minutes have talked about. My colleague from

Lanark talked about the Green Energy Act and how that has destroyed rural communities. My colleague from Windsor spoke about the horse racing industry and how that has been destroyed by the government. My colleague from—I apologize to the Minister of Transportation—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Vaughan.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Vaughan—stood and he talked about the very different lessons he drew from the campaign from what we have seen here on the opposition side. It's something that I spoke to when I had the opportunity to speak to the speech from the throne, and that is the urban-rural divide. It's one thing for the government to stand and say we must listen to them because they now have 58 seats, but we stand here saying, "You must also listen to us, because the people who elected us also have concerns in this province." So it is not a one-way dialogue where you get to tell us and we take that back to our constituents; no, no, no. From what my colleague from Lanark said, we have to represent the grassroots of this province. In order for us to do that, we must stand true to our values and stand true to the people who sent us to Queen's Park. That means you must also listen to us on this side of the House, and not solely dictate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you, Speaker. I want to add my compliments, along with my colleagues in the House, and congratulations to you on sitting in the chair once again.

It's a real pleasure for me to rise today on behalf of my constituents in London West. It's the first opportunity I've had since the election to speak on behalf of the people I represent.

I want to respond to some of the comments that were made by the member from Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington. He certainly has a clear zeal for reform. He has set out a very ambitious legislative agenda for himself with the kind of initiatives he wants to bring forward. On many of those things, I see some common ground in terms of the motivations that he has to ensure greater accountability and greater responsiveness of the Legislature to the real concerns of the people we represent.

0920

There was one point he made that I think deserves very careful reflection, and that is about the Liberals' risk of becoming too complacent and misinterpreting the results of the election. When I knocked on doors during the campaign, what I heard was a lot of talk about soaring hydro rates that were making life far too unaffordable for people; a lot of head shaking about the lack of consequences for the Liberals over all of the mismanagement of public resources that we had seen over the last session; I heard a real concern about the need for measures to get the local economy moving again. The Liberals have to take that into account when they move forward on their budget and their throne speech.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thanks to the members from Windsor–Tecumseh, Vaughan, Nepean–Carleton and London West for their comments.

I did keep it with some brevity, because I know that the Liberal government at the moment has a lot on their plate, and I didn't want to confuse them with too many things, so I just kept it to a minimum. But that might not always be the case. We could get a little bit long-winded sometimes in this chamber.

But I do want to respond to the member from Nepean–Carleton and the Minister of Transportation—if he cared to listen, because he is so intently listening to people, even the other ministers, right at the moment—the purpose of having 107 members in this assembly is to hear the concerns from those various localities and the demographics there. While I would challenge the Minister of Transportation to actually show me one of his constituents who said, “Continue to spend our money wisely”—I'll give that to him that maybe he did find somebody in his constituency who said that, but, more importantly, listen to what other areas have to say, because I'm sure the member from Vaughan doesn't come up to Tatlock very often, and he doesn't go to Verona very often, just as I try not to go to Vaughan very often. That's our role: to bring those concerns here, vocalize them, advocate for them and have an attentive ear on the other side of the House to ensure that those concerns are not lost in this place.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Words cannot describe what an honour it is to have the opportunity to rise in the House, represent the people of Windsor West and take part in the making of Ontario's history.

I would like to congratulate my fellow MPPs, both new and returning. We have all been given the incredible task of bringing the voices of our constituents to this place and to the attention of our colleagues, and I look forward to working with each one of you. I also want to acknowledge Teresa Piruzza, who represented my riding previous to me.

Speaker, I ask your indulgence as I offer my thanks to the numerous people who were instrumental in my campaign.

Our leader, Andrea Horwath: During her numerous visits to Windsor, I had the opportunity to get to know her. I am impressed by her rich character, service to her community, commitment to Ontario and her fighting spirit. Hers is a difficult job, and she does it with grace.

To my volunteers: I had many volunteers, too many to name in the time I have been given. Many spent from sun-up to sundown working on my campaign, and I often joked that we should set up cots in the campaign office so they could just spend the night, since they were there so often. I could not have asked for a more hard-working, dedicated team.

To the various labour affiliates: They spent many hours on my behalf making calls, knocking on doors and pulling the vote. I appreciate their efforts and their choice to spend their precious free time aiding me.

My gratitude to Robin, Ian, Kieran, Chris, Mariano, Dougie, John and Joe—those are the people I could count on seeing in my campaign office every day—and to Windsor city councillor Ron Jones and Catholic school board trustee Frank Favot, for supporting my nomination and allowing me the opportunity to enter into what would be a ride of a lifetime, also referred to as a campaign.

I had no shortage of sound advice available to me, thanks to Howard Pawley, the former Premier of Manitoba, and former MPPs Wayne Lessard and Ted Bounsall. Wayne and Ted represented the ridings of Windsor–Walkerville, Windsor–Riverside, Windsor West and Windsor–Sandwich during their time as MPPs.

Brian Masse, the member of Parliament for Windsor West, is my federal teammate. Brian is an inspiration. He works tirelessly for the constituents of Windsor West. When not in Ottawa, Brian spent time going door to door with me, and it was moving to see how tapped into the needs of the community he is and how many lives he has touched in his 12 years as the MP in our riding.

I must thank my family: my husband, Tyler, and my children, Morgan and Jacobb. There were many days we barely saw each other while I spent hours knocking on doors and they travelled Windsor West putting up signs. They did the work at home and made sure that when I got there, I had nothing to do but rest and prepare for the next busy day. Their support was and continues to be unwavering.

Lastly, I'll recognize the constituents of Windsor West. I always received a warm welcome on the doorstep of the thousands of people I visited. They shared some of their most personal experiences and deepest concerns. I will outline some of those concerns later in my presentation. Thank you, Windsor West, for putting your faith in me and giving me the opportunity to be your voice in this great place. I do not take this position lightly.

Let me share a little bit of Windsor West's rich history. Located in Old Sandwich Town is the Duff-Baby House, built by Alexander Duff as a fur trade post, which was later purchased by James Baby. The building is now owned by the Ontario Heritage Trust and houses government offices.

Mackenzie Hall, which is also located in Windsor West, was built by stonemason Alexander Mackenzie, who later became the second Prime Minister of Canada.

The Underground Railroad is a key part of history, which aided many slaves in their quest for freedom. Windsor West is a part of that history, and there is an international Underground Railroad monument erected to honour the struggles of those who made a very difficult journey and faced insurmountable obstacles.

Windsor also boasts a beautiful riverfront, which in my riding includes a sculpture garden, festival plaza and playgrounds.

As a city that borders the United States, Windsor provides two points of entry into Canada—a bridge over the Detroit River and a tunnel under it—both located in Windsor West. Being a city with a border crossing, we welcome many foreign visitors, as well as newcomers

looking to call Windsor home. Our proximity to the United States, low housing costs, beautiful parks, trails and waterfront, and welcoming attitude are what attract newcomers to our region. We happily say that we are a very diverse community.

My riding is not without its share of concerns. I will speak to each as they pertain to the throne speech. When speaking to the residents, I hear time and time again about the concerns around health care: Our ER wait times are too high, the number of primary care physicians is too low, home care wait times are too lengthy, and services are limited. Although there has been some investment into long-term-care facilities, it's simply not enough. Many people spend far too long in a hospital bed when they should be in a long-term-care facility. Ideally, patients who can return to their home would; however, the supports they need are not there for them. Improvements need to be made: investments in our care providers, as well as the buildings and hospitals that so many rely on. The people of Windsor have shown that—alongside New Democrats—they will not sit idly by and allow key medical treatments such as thoracic cancer surgery to be ripped from our community. We will not be told we have to travel two hours up the 401 to receive life-saving treatments. Ontario does not end in London.

There has been talk of a new state-of-the-art mega-hospital to be built in our region. Based on the Liberal record, myself and my constituents are concerned that it is just that: talk. We know there is a process moving forward with regard to the planning of the new hospital, but a plan and follow-through are very different things. The people of Windsor and Essex county deserve to have a definitive answer: Will there or won't there be a new hospital in our region, or is it simply a plan? When can we expect to see a new facility? How much will it cost taxpayers? And what will become of our current hospitals? The government promises transparency, and my constituents want to know the answers to these questions.

0930

From elementary school through high school, and then moving through to our post-secondary facilities, the Windsor area offers stellar educational experiences to all students.

Post-secondary education should be affordable for all. Every person should be given an opportunity to achieve their education goals without drowning in debt.

Teachers in Windsor and Essex county host a yearly event that benefits charitable organizations. The event is called Teachers Have Heart. I can tell you, through my role as a trustee for the public school board and from working with teachers and support staff during my campaign, teachers truly do have heart and want nothing but the best for our young learners. This cannot be forgotten at the provincial bargaining table, and we cannot have a repeat of Bill 115. This government must work with all public sector employees in a fair and inclusive manner.

I have seen first-hand how my children have benefited from public education. Our teachers and support staff provide more than a formal education. They are referees,

problem solvers, advice givers, shoulders to cry on and surrogate parents throughout a large part of our children's day. Many things are learned and memories made within the walls of our school buildings, and it is up to the government to make sure all supports are in place to provide the staff and students a safe and secure atmosphere for learning. Funding must be provided for adequate care and upkeep of our schools.

In Windsor, we proudly speak of the numerous new schools we have been able to build over the last decade—new buildings with bright classrooms, welcoming environments and energy-efficient heating and cooling systems. Windsor also has a large inventory of aging, historic schools, which we also speak fondly of but are underfunded for their upkeep. These schools are in our community, in our neighbourhoods, and we cannot lose any more of them to mega-schools that are often located outside the neighbourhoods they are built to serve.

The throne speech speaks of schools as community hubs, and I agree; they should be. But taking away neighbourhood schools and busing kids in great numbers does not fit the theme of a community hub. We can do better.

School boards are also underfunded for special education. Again, funding must be in place to allow boards to provide their staff and students a safe and secure learning and work environment. That includes the learning materials that help all students to thrive, including those with special needs.

Of great concern is the trend of our youth leaving our city when done school because they can't find a job that fits their needs. Investments must be made to support local business so they can afford to hire those entering the workforce. For those youth facing difficult times, supports must be offered so they have a safe, inviting environment to turn to, a place to call home or somewhere that welcomes them warmly and offers them support by way of food, clothing, shelter, the ability to focus on returning to school, obtaining a job and eventually thriving on their own.

Windsor does have facilities to aid our in-need or at-risk youth, one of which is the Windsor Youth Centre. Much-needed organizations such as the WYC receive little or no funding to provide their invaluable service to the youth and community as a whole. The people of Windsor are generous and help when they can, but organizations like the WYC count on donations from the community in order to offer food, clothing, shelter or bus tickets for youth to get to school or to a job interview.

Youth poverty is a growing concern. However, the problem extends to those most vulnerable from all age groups as well. A comprehensive strategy is needed to help lift people out of poverty and support them, not just in Windsor but in all of Ontario.

There was a time when the people of Windsor West could count on good-paying, stable jobs for themselves, their children and their children's children. Manufacturing jobs often meant a good salary, as well as pension and benefits. This is not the case anymore.

This government must develop an auto strategy that includes input from all those with a vested interest: mem-

bers from the other parties, company owners, CEOs, municipalities, as well as the labour force. In Windsor, one layoff, one job loss, ultimately turns into a great many more. We have lost GM, and we cannot afford to lose Ford and Chrysler as well. If these employers were to leave our city, it would be devastating.

Consideration must be given to new and emerging industries as well. Invest in the future today.

We must continue to strive to ensure those in the workforce earn a living wage. The recent rise in minimum wage is a good step forward, but many more should be taken as the cost of living, our everyday expenses, rises. The current minimum wage is still too low. This government needs to consider the hardship the rise in minimum wage has caused small business owners and implement measures to help ease the burden. Tax cuts for corporations benefit the wealthy; lower taxes for small business owners allow them the ability to maintain or hire staff and pay a livable wage.

People in Windsor West and all over Ontario are feeling squeezed financially. Already, outrageous hydro rates continue to climb. Auto insurance is unaffordable for many. Child care, where available, is often too expensive. People should not have to choose between groceries or paying the hydro bill.

I would like to acknowledge a great project currently under way in my riding, the Herb Gray Parkway. This major infrastructure project will undoubtedly greatly improve travel in Windsor, while providing an improved pathway to the United States. The people of Windsor West have expressed deep concern over the substandard girders that were initially installed in this major investment. Ultimately, after my colleague the member from Windsor–Tecumseh pressed the issue, the questionable girders were slated to be replaced. The concern of Windsor West residents was the government's willingness to move forward knowing the issue with the girders and the delay in the project. Homeowners continue to deal with construction dust in the air and settling on their property and vehicles. As I stated, the parkway is a much-needed infrastructure project in our community and I am pleased to see our region receive that type of investment.

I would like to take a moment and acknowledge all the men and women who are working so hard to complete the Herb Gray Parkway. Of special note is Giuseppe Serra, who unfortunately was killed in a construction accident while working on the parkway on June 17, 2014. My heart and condolences go out to his workers, family and friends. No worker should lose their life on the job.

I am running out of time to speak, so I will summarize what I have heard from my constituents prior to the campaign, during and following.

Steps must be taken to rebuild our horse racing industry. A snap decision was made, a decision that affected thousands across the province, including Windsor and Essex county, a poor decision that can be undone. It will take time—more than it did to decimate the industry—but it can be undone.

The people of Windsor West cannot afford to pay the ever-increasing costs of hydro and gas. They shouldn't have to choose between paying their hydro bill or feeding their families. Our goal should be to lift people out of poverty, not plunge them into it.

Improvements to health care are a must: investment in front-line workers, maintenance and upkeep of our hospitals, new state-of-the-art facilities and equipment. Cuts to services and moving life-saving treatments out of our community is not the answer, nor is it acceptable.

Supports for workers and the companies that employ them: Windsor cannot lose auto sector or other manufacturing jobs.

Windsor is a diverse community with a rich history and much to offer. We have an incredible record of festivals and celebrations that welcome visitors from near and far. We are a border town which boasts a beautiful waterfront and a place for newcomers to call home. We contribute greatly to the province of Ontario.

The Premier promised, during her first caucus meeting after the election, that she would not forget about Windsor. I can assure the Premier and this government that myself and my colleague from Windsor–Tecumseh, as well as the constituents from Windsor and Essex county, will not let this government forget Windsor.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I want to congratulate the new member from Windsor West and to welcome her to the House. Like those of us who sit in the back benches here, we are all on this learning journey together.

You shared with us your experiences of campaigning, the long, hard hours that you've put in on the campaign trail. This is something that we can all relate to. And you did a very excellent job of painting a very vivid picture for us of your riding of Windsor West. You do have many unique opportunities to express yourself. You're right there on the US border, so yours is a very unique experience.

0940

I want to talk a little bit about some of the things that you touched on. You mentioned long-term-care facilities, and you may be encouraged to know that in the upcoming budget, we have a plan to refurbish 30,000 long-term-care beds. This was in the last budget. Sadly, your side of the House did not support this.

You also talked about transparency. We are going to be looking at reintroducing the accountability act, and that again was up in April. In fact, it was the MPP for Kitchener Centre, John Milloy, my predecessor, who introduced that. Sadly, at an all-party committee meeting, that was also blocked by the NDP.

Now, you chatted about schools and hospitals, and your need in the Windsor area to see these improved. You'll be excited to know that we have a \$29-billion infrastructure plan that's going to look at things like hospitals and schools and roads and bridges. Sadly, you said no to that as well.

In terms of youth poverty, I'm glad to hear that you are encouraged by the fact that we have raised the min-

imum wage. We also have \$41 million in a homeless strategy that we hope to get through in our budget. Unfortunately, it didn't go through in the last budget because the NDP said no to it.

I would like to say, ultimately, welcome to you. You are in for an exciting experience, and I hope that you will be committed to—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you.

Ms. Daiene Vernile:—pursuing these issues that—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It's a pleasure to rise and address the comments made by our new colleague from Windsor West.

Some of your members know that I was born and raised down in your part of the country. A little town called Cottam is where I first put feet on this earth, and I moved away from there when I was about 18 years old, so I do know that part of the country fairly well.

You said that we need a comprehensive strategy to help get people out of poverty. I think the best way to get people out of poverty is a good-paying job. That, certainly, to me, makes sense. No matter how much you raise the minimum wage, it does not get people out of poverty, and it's really too bad. We have more people on minimum wage in this province now than we ever had, because of the job losses that have occurred under this current Liberal government. You are aware, certainly, of the Heinz closure and Kellogg's; those were good-paying jobs that left this province in no small part due to policies of the Liberal government.

I want to talk about the Green Energy Act, which unfortunately is still in effect in this province. We have tried to get that rescinded, changed. Maybe you don't know, but every time we did that, your party would vote against us. So maybe you could get them to change that a little bit, because hydro rates certainly are a factor in industry leaving this province. I also have heard stories about people paying either for groceries or hydro bills—that's pretty sad in this province; it really is.

But I do believe that we need a comprehensive strategy for job creation, which we do not have in this province at this current time.

Again, congratulations on your election to this Legislature.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Before I move on, I'd just like to give a reminder to the new members. I know it's a time deal around here all the time; you're on a schedule of two minutes. When I say, "Thank you," that's it and we move on. I don't want to have to say, "Thank you" five times. You're allowed two minutes, and you have to watch the clock to stay within your perimeter. Thank you.

Questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It gives me great pleasure to add a few comments to the new member from Windsor West, and I will be much more positive than what we've just heard from the new member from Kitchener Centre.

It's a great thing when you knock off a Liberal cabinet minister and take over a new riding—a very good thing.

Maybe that's why we heard the negativity coming from the other side of the House today. For everybody else, when they give their maiden speech, everything is positive, but not today. I wonder why. Anyway, I'll do my wondering.

I've known the new member for at least eight years in her role as a school board trustee, because my wife has been on the board for 20 years; they've served together. I know her well, and I know the attributes she will bring to this chamber.

The member spoke about Mackenzie Hall in her riding. I have fond memories of Mackenzie Hall. In fact, 39 years ago I met the woman who was then the manager of the Essex county housing authority, did an interview, and 39 years later we're still talking, which—

Interjections.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Yes, it's lasted 39 years.

She also talked about the Duff-Baby mansion. Duff-Baby—

Interjection: They're my relatives.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Are they? Good for you. It's used now to house a couple of the ministries, and they have these heavy photocopying machines. This goes back to the War of 1812 and Chief Tecumseh. We will at some point be approaching the government, with Les Amis Duff-Baby, about getting some of the ministry out of there and into a more convenient office space so Les Amis Duff-Baby can actually interpret the historic and heritage value of that home. We look forward to that.

Thank you very much, and welcome to the chamber the new member from Windsor West.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Welcome to your position here in this chair. I appreciate very much your lessons on decorum, and I will take them very much to heart.

I would like to thank the member for Windsor West. You bring great pedigree to this House. As a new member myself, I want you to know we very much appreciate the input that you will have in the House and look forward to working with you on some of the issues that you've raised.

I very much appreciate your review of the history of Windsor. I've had the pleasure of being in the community many, many times and eating tunnel wings, and look forward to going down more often and seeing you there.

I identify very clearly with the experience you had in running your campaign: It is difficult to win against someone who's been a long-standing member of this House, and I share that experience with you.

I would like to especially acknowledge your insights on the need for rebuilding infrastructure in your community. This was the message that I heard in my community. This is the message that I think our party is bringing forward. That is our mandate, that is our plan, and we look forward to having your input on the kinds of infrastructure that you would like to see built up in this province. Once again, I thank you very much for your contribution and look forward to working with you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member for Windsor West has two minutes to respond.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I'd like to thank the member from Beaches–East York for the kind words, and the member from Perth–Wellington as well. I absolutely agree: Good-paying jobs are the key to lifting people out of poverty, and that's why it's imperative in my area that there is a good, solid plan around the auto sector and the manufacturing sector.

I'd like to thank the member from Windsor–Tecumseh. He has been a great resource to me over the years and I'm sure will continue to be.

To the member from Kitchener Centre, yes, there is still a need in my area for investment in long-term care. I need to point out that what we didn't support was a government with a record of waste and scandal. In 1995, Dwight Duncan made note of something to the effect of how the constituents voted for him, which clearly showed their distaste for the current government. I would say that by my constituents electing me, the same can be said for their distaste for the government.

Interjections.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Yes. I would hope that, in the future, the member from Kitchener Centre and I can work together well and put differences aside for the sake of our constituents, as well as all of those in Ontario.

Thank you for the time to speak.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mrs. Cristina Bento Martins: Mr. Speaker, it is my great honour to rise before this House today for my inaugural speech as the member for the fabulous riding of Davenport, to comment on the throne speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, David C. Onley.

I would like to begin my remarks by congratulating the Speaker on his re-election. I would also like to congratulate all members here today on their election, especially the new members who, along with me, make up the class of 2014.

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I am looking forward to working with all of my colleagues, and I'm honoured to serve this House as a member of the Liberal caucus. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of my predecessor, Jonah Schein, and I wish him well in his future endeavours.

I would like to thank the people of Davenport for their support in the recent election. I feel truly honoured and humbled by the confidence you bestowed upon me to represent you at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and the confidence you have expressed in our government's vision for Ontario.

I would not be here today without the hard work, dedication and support of so many volunteers and my riding association, and to them I want to express my heartfelt thank you. The tireless hours you devoted to my campaign were gratefully appreciated, and I want to specifically acknowledge my riding association president, Meaghan Coker, and my campaign co-chairs, Josie

Verrilli and Ferd Longo, who together ensured our campaign was the best ever. I would also like to thank and acknowledge my good friend Corrado Paina who, in his words, "feels a bit responsible" for what has happened to me. And I would be remiss if I didn't thank and acknowledge my 2011 campaign manager, Christine Innes, for her support, her friendship and her mentorship. Once again, my heartfelt thank you to all of you.

When the people of Davenport and Ontario elected Premier Kathleen Wynne on June 12, they voted for jobs, they voted for growth—they voted to build Ontario up, and your government is ready to do exactly that. We are going to build Ontario up for everyone in this province.

Davenport is home to just under 105,000 people and is rich in cultural and linguistic diversity. It is the place where several iconic neighbourhoods come together, like Bloordale, Little Portugal, Corso Italia, West Queen West, Bloorcourt, the Junction Triangle and Brockton Village. We have the highest percentage of ethnic Portuguese, as well as the highest percentage of European immigrants in the province. On any given day, you can hear everything from Italian, Tamil, Spanish, Portuguese, Urdu, Punjabi and Vietnamese being spoken on the streets of Davenport. We are truly a mini United Nations, and I look forward to representing all of those diverse voices.

It is also home to many cultural community centres and associations, like Casa do Alentejo, Casa das Beiras and Casa dos Açores; and I would like to commend them, along with all ethnically diverse cultural centres and associations in Davenport, as well as their hard-working volunteers, for dedicating so much of their time and serving as ambassadors for their cultures and traditions, and for contributing to the vibrant cultural mosaic and richness of our community and province. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with all our community groups and organizations.

In the summer months, Davenport boasts many street festivals and parades. For the past 27 years, the Alliance of Portuguese Clubs and Associations of Ontario has organized Portugal Week and the Portugal Day parade. Considered the largest of its kind in North America, this event is a wonderful way to promote Portuguese culture and heritage. These festivities are a true testament to the strength, endurance and significance of the Portuguese community in Ontario. They also provide an opportunity to reflect on the invaluable contributions that the Portuguese have made to our community and to our province.

The BIG on Bloor Festival, an initiative of the Bloordale BIA, the Bloor Improvement Group and the Bloordale community, is a car-free event which takes place every year in mid-July along Bloor Street between Dufferin and Lansdowne. BIG on Bloor celebrates the arts, culture, community and small businesses with a unique community and city-building festival featuring hundreds of events, activities and exhibitions. I invite you all to Davenport to attend the seventh BIG on Bloor Festival on July 19 and 20.

Canada's hottest street festival, Salsa on St. Clair, takes place annually in Davenport. This year the festival

is celebrating its 10th year and is expanding into a week-long celebration of Latin music, dance, food and culture. From July 12 to July 20, you are all welcome to Davenport and to the biggest fiesta north of the border.

Like so many other ridings in Ontario, and indeed our country, Davenport has shown that we can build a strong and unique community that respects and embraces diversity. We are also a community of hope and dreams. Davenport is home for many newcomers who hope and dream of a fair chance so they may succeed.

When I come to work in this wonderful building of legend and history, I think about the people who sent me here, the voters of Davenport, who shared with me their hopes, their dreams and their concerns. I listened and I learned, and I'm committed to accomplishing what you have sent me here to do.

Being part of an immigrant family in Davenport is an experience I have lived, and it is why I am so passionate about representing these families. Davenport is the riding that welcomed me, my parents and my brother in 1970 when we immigrated to Ontario from Portugal. My parents came to Canada to seek a better life. They also taught me and my brother to be proud of our Portuguese heritage, as well as our adopted country and province that embraced us and that we now call home. Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge my parents, José Augusto and Arminda Bento, for the unconditional love and support they have so generously given to me and my brother, Luis, throughout our lives.

My parents valued the importance of knowledge, responsibility, hard work and the need to help others. These are the values that have shaped and guided me, and this is why I'm inspired to work for the people in Davenport. The communities, residents and issues in Davenport are incredibly diverse, and I'm committed to being a vocal advocate for the concerns of all Davenport residents.

My connection to this community runs deep. I went to elementary school in Davenport at St. Rita Catholic School. My husband's business is in Davenport. My sons attend Portuguese classes and play soccer in Davenport. And Davenport is where for the last five years I have volunteered with the Federation of Portuguese Canadian Business and Professionals, a not-for-profit corporation founded 32 years ago, which fosters both business and community development and is proud to foster the oldest and largest scholarship program in the Portuguese community.

I want to make progress on the issues and topics that matter most to the residents of Davenport, such as transportation and infrastructure. Investment in transportation and infrastructure is not only an investment in the economy; it is also an investment in people. I'm very proud of the Liberal plan presented for transportation and infrastructure. It is a pragmatic and progressive plan that is much needed to ensure that Ontario continues to move forward in the right direction. Anything less than this plan is not enough. This is what leadership is. It is about investing in our greatest asset, the people of Ontario.

It's also about a cleaner environment, which is why I was so pleased to see the government commit to electrifi-

cation of all GO Transit lines, including the Union Pearson Express, as part of increased infrastructure spending.

Davenport is home to many seniors. They have worked hard, have raised their families and have contributed to our community and our great province. I am proud that our government, through the Seniors Community Grant Program, is committed to providing seniors with a better quality of life by providing them with the opportunity to connect, contribute, learn, and lead active lives. I'm especially proud that our government has already begun to work to create an independently managed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, a plan which will provide Ontarians with an additional annual pension payout, as well as build broader economic confidence.

Having worked in the pharmaceutical industry for more than 15 years, which included several years working abroad in the USA and in Portugal, I have witnessed the transformation in our health care system under the leadership of the Ontario Liberal government, and I am proud that our government will continue to build a fairer and healthier Ontario. It will place the patient at the centre and make strategic investments in community care to keep people where they want to be: in their home, rather than in a hospital.

1000

A vibrant community also requires strong employment centres with good-paying jobs. Davenport is home to many such well-known companies. The Gladstone Cadbury factory is a neighbourhood icon and a favourite amongst kids at Halloween. Davenport is also home to cutting-edge technology employers like Ubisoft Toronto, a product of past Liberal government investment in the tech sector.

It also requires compassion, especially for new Canadians arriving as refugees or immigrants from difficult conditions. Davenport is fortunate to have supportive charities like the South Asian Women's Centre, where executive director Kripa Sekhar and her team have been providing settlement services to at-risk women. The centre was also recently recognized through an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant for \$100,000 to train service providers and peer mentors to help victims of human trafficking and forced marriage. Their good works are an example for all Canadians and represent the heart of our country as an immigrant nation.

I'm a mother of two amazing boys, and like any parent, I want the best for them. They remain at the heart of my commitment to maintaining and improving our education system in Ontario. With my sons enrolled in our publicly funded education system, I have experienced first-hand the difference a Liberal government has made in education. Today, Ontario's education system is among the best in the English-speaking world. A good education system is the foundation of a successful society, and I look forward to continuing our work to ensure all children in Ontario are given the opportunity to succeed.

I'm especially proud of our government's commitment to continue providing students with the 30% Off Ontario

Tuition grant, making post-secondary education more accessible to students. I know of many students in Davenport who have gone on to post-secondary education, thanks to this grant, and many more who are looking forward to post-secondary education, thanks to this grant.

But it takes more than education for our youth to succeed. The youth unemployment rate is unacceptably higher than it is for older Ontarians, which is why I support our government's youth jobs strategy. This program benefits unemployed youth between 15 and 29, with an added focus on recent immigrants and visible minorities, and it has helped young people in Davenport and across Ontario to find work and to start their own businesses.

Of course, all work and no play is no way to build a community. A holistic approach is needed, and Davenport is also home to a thriving arts scene. There are a number of small and growing theatre companies and arts groups that have set up shop in Davenport, but I wanted to mention one in particular: the Theatre Centre, led since 2003 by the amazing artistic director, Franco Boni. The Theatre Centre is a nationally recognized arts incubator that uses a research and development model to support Toronto's cultural sector. They recently opened its new location in the former Carnegie Library in West Queen West, helped in part by a \$1.2-million grant from the province. I'm proud to be part of a government that supports arts and arts education for young people.

Also calling Davenport home is the Portuguese Pioneer Museum, which was inaugurated in 2003 to honour Portuguese immigrants who arrived in Canada predominantly between 1953 and 1955. It is currently located on St. Clair Avenue West, not far from where many of the immigrants arrived. These pioneers, who scattered all across the country, created a path for many future immigrants. In the museum, you will find stories and memorabilia, which provide a snapshot of the lives of those who were truly pioneers for their time and who helped shape our community, our province and our country. The museum currently has an exhibit of artifacts in the display cases in the legislative building. I encourage you to visit the displays and to visit the museum.

I would not be here today were it not for the support of my family. Once again, thank you to my parents for their love and support. Thank you to my brother, Lou, and his lovely wife, Grace, along with their two beautiful children, Phillipe and Jessica. Thank you for your support and your unconditional love. Thank you for looking after my boys when canvassing days were long.

To my husband, Fernando, and my two wonderful boys, André and David, thank you for supporting my decision to run and for believing in me. Your support, patience and unconditional love are my foundation and mean the world to me, as you do. I love you and thank you.

I am incredibly excited about the work ahead. I know that the residents of Davenport will hold me to the highest standard, which is what they deserve. I thank you all again for giving me this great honour.

In conclusion, I want to say that I am proud of our Premier's leadership, and I endorse this government's vision for building Ontario up.

I would like to congratulate all members elected to this assembly. I look forward to working with you and all my colleagues in government to ensure that all Ontario remains the best place to live, work and raise a family in Canada.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Merci.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Due to time restraint, we won't be doing the questions and comments.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): This House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1006 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ted Arnott: I wish to introduce the family members of our page Ethan Walker. I understand Anette Walker, Judy Walker and Dan Walker are all here today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I have the honour of welcoming the family of our page Matthew Lynn; he is a constituent of mine in Etobicoke Centre. His mother, Jeannel Lynn; his father, Robert Lynn; his brother John Lynn; and grandmother Juliana Tiu are here. Thank you for coming.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I would like to welcome Dan and Judy Walker of Niagara Falls, who are visiting today with their daughter-in-law Anette. They are here today to see their grandson Ethan, who is our page captain of the day. Welcome.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I have the pleasure of welcoming to the House today the mother of our page captain who is from the riding of Burlington: Kathy Hoogsteen, mother of Daniel Hoogsteen.

Mr. Joe Cimino: The father of Ashley Bowes, one of our pages, is in attendance today: Scott Bowes. We welcome him from Oshawa.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I would like to introduce two interns in the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services who are just making their way into the gallery: Larissa Alszegei and Andrea Poopalapillai. Welcome to Queen's Park.

REPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER OF ONTARIO

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table the 2014 Annual Greenhouse Gas Progress Report from the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Jim Wilson: I have questions for the Premier. Premier, you've ignored dire financial warnings from

economists, opposition members and credit rating agencies, but perhaps you simply need to hear from a member of your own caucus about the seriousness of a credit downgrade to sway you from sending Ontario back into a recession. In regard to Ontario's credit rating—I admit it's from back in 1994, but it was a wise remark all the same—the member for York Centre stated, “This is a very serious indictment of the government's fiscal and economic policies.... and unless the province gets its fiscal house in order, we will see more serious repercussions, to the detriment of all citizens of Ontario.”

Premier, members of your own caucus understand that the path you are taking is putting front-line services at risk. Will you again reconsider putting forward the budget you are planning to put forward before we get a credit downgrade?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: If I heard the Leader of the Opposition correctly, he said that was a quote from 1994. We're in 2014.

We have brought forward a plan to the people of Ontario. We will reintroduce a budget on Monday that will lay that plan out again, and if the budget is passed in the Legislature, we will move to implement that plan.

That plan focuses on the investments that we know are needed in order for the economy to thrive, investments like infrastructure, public transit, roads, bridges—the kinds of investments that the member for Wellington—Halton Hills was talking about in his statement a couple of days ago, the kinds of investments that every member in this Legislature knows are necessary in their communities in order for their communities to thrive. That's the foundation of our plan, and I know we have a fundamental disagreement with the Leader of the Opposition.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: I remind the Premier that Mike Harris was gone 11 years ago, and you keep quoting him. So I guess that's going to stop now, is it?

Premier, we don't have a fundamental disagreement on infrastructure. We had \$2.9 billion built into our financial plan to balance the budget should we have formed the government after the last election. You had \$2.9 billion a year, the same as we did. The roads have to be paved. The hospitals have to be built. The schools have to be built and maintained. We agree with that. That's a very small part of your spending.

What we have a fundamental difference with is, you're continuing to go on a wild spending spree on the operating side.

Jack Mintz says that if we get the downgrade, which mostly everyone is expecting except you, a 1% increase in interest rates would cost us over \$3 billion a year—\$3 billion that will force you, if you don't change course, to cut front-line services like health and education. There is no other type of mathematical equation possible.

Will you change course, rethink your budget—we won't criticize you—and make sure that we don't get a credit downgrade?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's hard to come down on somebody when you make me laugh, leader. The member from Prince Edward—Hastings, the member from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, the minister without portfolio and the Minister of Agriculture, come to order, please.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You just did. Now it's two.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We've talked about the investments, whether it's in infrastructure, whether it's in the talent and skills of our people or whether it's in partnering with businesses. Those are investments that are necessary.

The other side of the plan is the path to balance. It is a recognition that we have a fiscal challenge that we have to confront. That path to balance is laid out in our budget that we will reintroduce on Monday.

So for the Leader of the Opposition to suggest that we are not paying attention, it's just not true. We absolutely are. But what we're not going to do is what he and his party suggested during the election. We're not going to cut and slash across government. We're not going to cut education. We're not going to cut health care. We're not going to cut deeply into the services that people need. We are going to make sure that children in this province have full-day kindergarten, that there is more home care, that personal support workers are able to do the work that we know is necessary to transform the health care system. Those are the—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Final supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Well, Premier, with a debt as large as the one that your government has created, Ontario will be in real trouble if we continue in the direction that you're going and the front-line services we depend on across the province will be affected at some point in time.

Your member for Mississauga—Erindale understands this when he said, “This accumulating debt is ... an unfair burden on our children and grandchildren, a burden we must address for our immediate and future economic prosperity.”

Premier, your permanent increases to Ontario's operating costs will have severe implications to our credit rating, our ability to pay down the debt and our capacity to continue delivering front-line services. I'm going to ask you again: Will you change direction, take your time and fix the budget? Because there's no evidence in the budget you presented on May 1 that you're ever going to balance the books, not by 2017-18. There is no evidence that you're ever aiming to balance the books. Show us the evidence or fix your budget so we don't get a downgrade.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It's just not true that there's no evidence that we will be able to eliminate the

deficit. In fact, we're on target to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18. We have met our deficit-reduction targets every single year. We are the leanest per capita spending government in the country and we are going to continue to have those constraints in place.

But I would just ask the Leader of the Opposition to consider the impact. You know, he talked about Mike Harris. The reason that we continue to talk about Mike Harris, quite apart from the fact that the platform they ran on was totally reminiscent of Mike Harris, is because the impact of the cuts that he put in place have had a long-term influence on the economy of the province and on the societal fabric.

If we do not invest in home care, if we do not have full-day kindergarten in place for every child across the province and if we do not make the changes in health care that are necessary—I would ask him to consider what the future looks like if we don't make those investments. I would suggest that the future would be quite—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to ask the member from Simcoe North to come to order, please.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'll try to be more quiet, sir. You're intimidating me.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm not asking for a discussion.

New question?

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question as well is to the Premier. She wants to talk about what the future will look like. Let's talk about the past decade. Over the past 11 years, our finances in this province have deteriorated. You have doubled the debt and you have lost hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs. We are now a have-not province and credit rating agencies are now telling us that we are going to see a downgrade that's inevitable.

1040

Right now, the government borrows \$11 billion a year just to pay interest on its debt. That is the third-largest spending priority of that government. So think about it this way—to the members opposite, I say to you—every single dollar you spend on servicing the debt and the deficit is a dollar less for a hospital in our province or for kids in our classrooms.

I ask the Premier, will the government do the responsible thing, refocus its budget, heed economists' warnings, and ensure that we have the sustainability for our valued public services?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, again, I would say to the member opposite—I know that the President of the Treasury Board is going to want to comment in the supplementary, but let me just say this: I'm happy to talk about the last decade. Let's talk about the way we are. We have improved in terms of students graduating from high school. When we came into office, 68% of young people were graduating from high school; 83% of students are graduating from high school—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound will come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The irresponsible heckle from the other side that undermines our excellent teachers—to suggest that somehow that has to do with making high school easier—that's not the case. What it's about is putting the supports in place that allow kids to succeed, and not letting people fall through the cracks. That's what we have done over the last 10 years. Those are the kinds of initiatives and investments we will continue to make, because we know that leads to a bright future for the province.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Before I start the clock, I am going to make a comment. I've tried a calmer way to ask you to come to order and that's not working, so I'm going to jump right into warnings.

Please.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks, Speaker.

Again to the Premier: You talk about people not falling through the cracks. Some 300,000 people woke up this morning without a manufacturing job. People are leaving this province, not coming to it like I did in my generation, when there were a million jobs created over a decade ago by a previous administration, because they knew the value of sustainable taxes; they knew the value of spending dollars wisely.

I think it's important for the Premier and the members of her cabinet to understand what a credit downgrade will mean. It will mean increased borrowing costs. That means it's taking money directly out of our hospitals and out of our schools. It also means you're going to have to raise taxes, and that is going to come to a very difficult burden on middle-class families across this province, who are already struggling with high hydro rates, high taxes and of course higher gas and grocery bills.

The Premier must understand she needs to refocus her budget. Will she give the credit rating agencies a signal of restraint—

Interjection.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: —and refocus her budget so that she can make sure there's no burden on—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

The Minister of Energy is warned.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: All parties in this House agree that we need to get back to balance. We think we can do it. We are committed to doing it by 2017-18. The NDP made the same commitment in the election. I must say, you promised to get there a year earlier, but you also promised massive tax cuts, which is not part of our plan.

I just want to make a gentle reminder that these three plans were put before the people of Ontario—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin—Caledon is warned.

Carry on, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: There was a clear choice put to the people of Ontario, and on June 12, the people of Ontario spoke. They preferred our plan of a thoughtful, deliberate path to balance. They chose that over your plan of reckless cuts. The people have spoken.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Unfortunately for the government, so too have the credit rating agencies and noted economists. They have a gentle reminder for you, and I'll read from Jack Mintz. He says if interest rates rise to even historical norms, each point increase in interest could add a minimum of \$3 billion in annual interest payments, which would severely cripple Ontario's ability to deliver services.

That is a serious reminder to your government that you must learn to get this right. My daughter's generation depends on it. Our public services depend on it. Families across Ontario depend on it. You have to get something right. Will you refocus your budget, or are you going to let the credit rating agencies do it for you?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: With the greatest respect, if anybody needs to refocus their plan, it might be you.

Your plan includes massive tax cuts. Your plan includes reduction in personal income taxes and reduction in corporate taxes. That is not the way to go. If you're so concerned about the deficit, why are you promising massive tax cuts? Now is the time to be—

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Because it creates jobs.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Oh, it creates a million jobs, perhaps, divided by eight. I don't really want to get into the math here, but my point is that we have a plan. We are committed to achieving that plan. It is a thoughtful plan that protects services that matter to the people of this province.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The Premier took an important step yesterday: She finally admitted that the government may be preparing for the privatization of all or part of Hydro One, OPG or the LCBO. Specifically, the Premier said that this may or may not be the outcome of the government's plan.

Now, this was an important step in levelling with the public about the true nature of the plan that the Premier is cooking up for Ontario. Will the Premier take the next step and admit that, in fact, her plan depends entirely on a fire sale of valuable public assets?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, again, the leader of the third party is just stating inaccuracies. It's just not the case. It's just not the case that what we have proposed—if she wants to look at the details on page 164 of the document that we introduced and will reintroduce at the beginning of the week, it lays out exactly what we are asking Ed Clark and his group to look at. What that is is a responsible look at the assets

that are owned by the people of Ontario to make sure that we optimize the value of those assets to the people of Ontario.

But that's one part of the plan. We have laid out the investments that we are going to make as we reintroduce the budget on Monday, we have laid out the constraints that we know have to continue to be in place, and we have laid out the process for building the province up, all of which I hope—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier has appointed the current CEO and president of TD Bank, Ed Clark, to look at how to sell off some of Ontario's most important public assets, like the LCBO, Hydro One and the OPG. At the same time, she has tasked Ed Clark's son, Bert Clark, the CEO of Infrastructure Ontario, with leading the sell-off of those very same assets.

Isn't the Premier at all concerned that Ontarians would see this as a bit of a conflict of interest?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just address that second point first, just to say that the issues around conflict of interest are being dealt with in terms of it being very clear what the lines of decision-making are. All of that is being tended to appropriately. But I want to just read from the budget document to make it clear to the leader of the third party what we've asked.

"The Premier's Advisory Council on Government Assets," which is the group that the leader of the third party is talking about, "will examine how to get the most out of key government assets to generate better returns and revenues for Ontarians. The council will report directly to the Premier of Ontario and be supported by existing resources within the government. The council has been given a mandate to maximize the value" of these government assets "to the province, including such measures as efficient governance, growth strategies, corporate reorganization, mergers, acquisitions and public-private partnerships. The council will give preference to continued government ownership of all core strategic assets."

That is what we laid out in the budget.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: As the current CEO of TD Bank, Ed Clark may have a remarkable CV; he might be the most brilliant person on earth. But a lot of people have these kinds of credentials, people who are not the dad of Infrastructure Ontario's CEO.

1050

Now, the Premier has put together a plan whereby two members from one of Canada's wealthiest families are working both sides of a deal to sell off valuable public assets. Isn't the Premier at all concerned about what this looks like to Ontarians, or is this just the regular Liberal way?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the NDP way is to smear the reputations of reputable people who have expertise that is needed by government.

What we have done is we have asked someone with the expertise that is necessary to look at things like selling our GM shares—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —making sure that our real estate assets are optimized. Those are the kinds of things that we have asked Ed Clark to look at, and we have done that within the context of very strict rules around conflict of interest and around integrity. So all of that is being tended to.

What I would say to the leader of the third party is that I hope she understands that vilifying the entire private sector and vilifying people with expertise in the private sector is not—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier. The Liberal Trojan Horse budget, which masquerades as progressive, is full of surprises. For example, the Premier has a plan to sell off public assets. She even knows how much she's going to be able to get for those assets that she's selling off. In fact, according to the budget, which she just quoted at length, it's \$3.15 billion. She's going to get a hand-picked father-and-son team taking care of both sides of that deal.

How can the Premier say she may or may not be planning a fire sale of assets when she's already counted the money in her budget?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would just ask that the leader of the third party make it clear to the Legislature and to the people of the province which part of the list of things that I'm going to go over right now that are in our budget, she does not support: for example, \$4.2 billion in school retrofits and builds; a made-in-Ontario pension plan; an increase in the Ontario Child Benefit; an increase in social assistance benefits; \$810 million to support adults with developmental disabilities; the expansion of low-income health benefits; \$20 million for expanding the Student Nutrition Program; \$42 million to prevent and reduce homelessness.

I will complete the list in the supplementary, but I think it would be a very, very good thing for the leader of the NDP and her members to say which of those things she doesn't support.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Start the clock.

Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Our list is pretty clear: massive privatization, massive sell-off of public assets, the likelihood of 100,000 people being fired. Those are things that are not progressive; those are things that New Democrats don't support.

The budget says in black and white that the government is looking at the sale of assets, "including ... crown corporations, such as Ontario Power Generation, Hydro One and the Liquor Control Board of Ontario."

I have a question for the Premier: What other crown corporations are the Liberals perhaps planning to sell off? The OLG? The ROM? TVO? Infrastructure Ontario itself? Maybe she can come clean with the entire list, the things that aren't actually spelled out in the budget.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The flight of fancy that the leader of the third party is taking right now is really quite something.

Let me just continue, Mr. Speaker: Does she or does she not, and do her members or do they not, support \$50 million for a new local poverty reduction fund? Do they or do they not support child care modernization and investments in early learning? Do they or do they not support wage increases for personal support workers? Do they support new funding for long-term-care homes? Do they support in vitro fertilization funding? Do they support expanded mental health and addictions—

Mr. Paul Miller: It's not enough.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek is warned.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Do they support a comprehensive aboriginal action plan? All of those initiatives are part of the budget. Those are initiatives that we will implement if we get passage of the budget. I sincerely hope that the leader of the opposition and all of her members from Toronto, from the North and from Niagara, will support us.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, the Liberals are awfully good at making lists, but they're really bad at getting things done in Ontario.

You know what? This government is masquerading as progressive. It has surprises other than the carte blanche sale of our crown corporations and public assets. There's also the likelihood that 100,000 people in this province will lose their jobs as a result of this plan.

So now can the people of Ontario be told by the Premier how many families should be worried about the following list of people who might be lost to them in terms of services? How many nurses are going to be gone? How many teaching assistants? How many child care workers? How many personal support workers? How many paramedics? How many firefighters and other public sector workers will be there when this budget is said and done and—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm sorry. I'll come back for your wrap-up.

The Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure is warned.

Finish, please.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My point for the Premier: The question is, how many of these valuable public sector services are going to be lost? How many of these workers are going to be there when families need them at the end of this budget's implementation?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, the whole thrust of our budget and our plan that we ran on was to make the investments that are necessary for people in this province to allow the economy to grow and to provide the services that we know people need. It's very, very interesting to me that we are having the same debate with the NDP as we are having with the Conservatives.

The fact is that we have taken a balanced and a rounded approach. We recognize that it is necessary to do things like make sure that our assets work for the people of Ontario. We understand that. But we also understand that making sure that the most vulnerable in this province have the support of their government and that we do everything, everything in our power, to make sure that they get the resources that they need—that's what our budget is about. That's what you should be supporting.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. New question.

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Todd Smith: My question this morning is for the minister responsible for the Pan Am Games. Minister, your government has continually seen cost overruns at the Pan Am Games which are just over a year away. We originally heard that a lighting display on the Bloor viaduct over the Don Valley Parkway was going to cost \$1.8 million. That's a lot of money, you must admit, for some Christmas lights. I want to know, Minister, can you tell us how far over budget that light project is now?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question and congratulate him for taking on this new role as critic, and also thank the Premier for this opportunity to take on this exciting file.

You know, Ontario is in such a good place when it comes to the Pan Am Games. We're going to really celebrate our athletes. We're going to celebrate our province and our country. For the first time in almost 100 years we've taken on a major multi-sport event. I guess the last one was the Commonwealth Games back in the 1930s. We're going to take on a multinational event to really showcase what Ontario has to offer. I'm so proud to take on this file.

In regard to the infrastructure project that the member questioned us about, that's a city of Toronto project. We have nothing to do with it at Infrastructure Ontario or through the Pan Am Games. I would ask him to ask the city council who's responsible for it—

Hon. Jeff Leal: Rob Ford.

Hon. Michael Coteau: —or Rob Ford. They can get the answer from the city of Toronto.

1100

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Todd Smith: I'm not so sure if the minister is actually correct on that.

While he is becoming Ontario's version of Clark Griswold, costing us an awful lot of money on Christmas lights, this Bloor viaduct at the Pan Am Games is at a site that has absolutely nothing to do with any athletic venue. I can tell you that cost has now gone—get this; I want to make sure he knows—from \$1.8 million up to \$4.6 million for some lighting displays.

Minister, I ask on behalf of the taxpayers of Ontario: What's it going to take for your government to actually bring the Pan Am Games in on budget and on schedule? Or do you think it's okay to continue to up the price, up the budgets and just send the bill to the Ontario taxpayer?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Michael Coteau: If the member opposite is going to criticize this government and the Pan Am Games, he has got to get his facts in order. The project he's talking about has nothing to do with the provincial government's—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, you're warned.

Finish, please.

Hon. Michael Coteau: It has nothing to do with the provincial government's operation with Infrastructure Ontario; it's a city of Toronto project.

But I have to say I'm excited about the games, because we have 50 municipalities working with the province and the federal government to put on the Pan Am Games. It's the first time, I would say, that 50 municipalities have come together in any major games to really showcase what Ontario has to offer. I'm very proud to take on this file, very proud of our athletes and very proud of Ontario for taking on this amazing responsibility.

HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. For a very, very long time now, there have been calls to this House to give the Ontario Ombudsman oversight of our health care system. Life-and-death events happen in our hospitals every day. Sometimes things go wrong and people want answers. They turn to the Ontario Ombudsman, an independent third party with investigating powers and abilities, to give them answers.

Why won't this government give the Ontario Ombudsman oversight of our health care system?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm very proud that yesterday my colleague, my seatmate, the President of the Treasury Board, reintroduced our accountability act, which includes a very important provision in it: the creation of the position of the patient ombudsman. This speaks to the essence of what we strive to do as a province and as a government—focus on quality of care for patients, on

customer service, on making sure that what we do through our health care system truly addresses the needs and the front-line services of those who most need them: individuals and their families.

I am also equally proud that our patient ombudsman is focusing—it gives us the ability to have an individual who is wholly focused on one task; that's looking at our health care system and addressing patient needs, being the strongest possible advocate for our patients and addressing those challenges that do come up from time to time, aspiring to ensure the quality of care can be the best it possibly can.

I'm proud that we've introduced this. I look forward to it passing, hopefully, in the very near future.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Speaker, what people in Ontario want, what they have said they want, is an independent officer. It is somebody they trust to be on their side. It is the third party that will give them answers, that will help them turn the page, that will help them gain closure when things go wrong in our health care system. This is not what you're giving them.

I ask the minister to look at the tens of thousands of petitions to this House, to look at the private member's bill that I have presented and the people who support it, to go on social media and look at the tens of thousands of people who ask you to do the right thing: to give the Ombudsman oversight of our health care system—not a patients' ombudsman under Health Quality Ontario.

I'd like the minister to explain to Ontarians, to those tens of thousands of people who are asking you, why you refuse to give the Ontario Ombudsman oversight of our health care system.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, I have to say I'm shocked, because I'm used to very positive, constructive, useful information and criticism, at times, coming from the member opposite on the health care file. We welcome that constructive criticism whenever it comes.

But on this case, I have to profoundly disagree. This is an individual who doesn't have responsibility for a myriad of priorities across the government but is wholly focused on the health care system; who has all the powers of the Ombudsman and is housed within the Health Quality Ontario, which, in fact, is an agency that the Ombudsman of Ontario does have oversight for—an individual who addresses all of the needs and the requirements that you've asked for.

Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, the many, many people who I've spoken to about this actually prefer this option, where it is a dedicated person who isn't focused on everything that government does, but solely on improving our health care system and addressing that front-line service to patients, patient quality, making sure that all the individuals and families across the province truly have their needs met.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Minister, Ontario has been a leader in making sure that the dignity and respect of everyone is upheld, regardless of where they come from, their sexual orientation or gender identification. Toby's Act is an important example of that, and my constituents want to ensure that the values the act represents are also extended to inmates in the care of our correctional facilities.

Speaker, through you to the minister: What are we doing to ensure that inmates are treated with the respect and dignity that Ontario believes they should be treated with?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Let me first thank the new member from Ottawa—Orléans for her question and her commitment to issues on human rights. I want to congratulate her on her election. I look forward very much to working with her closely on this issue and many issues that impact her community.

Speaker, it was a tremendous day in 2012 when this Legislature passed Toby's Act. I was personally very honoured to work along with the MPP from Parkdale—High Park and the MPP from Whitby—Oshawa in marking a milestone in ensuring that we protect the gender identity and gender expression of Ontarians in our Human Rights Code. We are the first province to have done so.

I am very much committed to making sure that, under my Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, our policies related to inmates who come into our correctional facilities comply with Toby's Act. That's why I was present at the Ontario Human Rights Commission's launch of the guidelines based on the amended code, and I look forward to continuing to work with them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Speaker, I'm happy to hear about ongoing advocacy, as well as demonstrating that correctional institutions are respecting gender identity and expression.

In the past, Ontarians and Canadians have fought to secure their freedom of choice in gender and sexual orientation. A recent media report, however, indicated that provincial inmates are still placed based on biological sex rather than their self-expression.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Can he tell my constituents of Ottawa—Orléans what his ministry is doing to protect the rights and dignity of transgender and intersex inmates?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to be very clear in terms of what our current policy is when it comes to inmates coming into correctional facilities. I want to be clear that the current policy is that the individual's self-identification is the key consideration when determining placement in a correctional facility. This identification is made regardless of whether or not the inmate has undergone medical treatment to align their physical bodies with their gender identity.

In addition, when transgender and intersex inmates are first admitted to provincial correctional facilities, they are given the freedom to choose the gender of the officer who will perform the physical screening and even elect to

have both male and female staff present. This is the current policy.

As I mentioned earlier, we're working very closely with the Ontario Human Rights Commission to make sure that our new policy fully complies with the guidelines that have been put out by the Human Rights Commission, and, of course, we will continue to consult with the trans community as well to make sure that their point of view is taken into account.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Minister, in 2003, the Minister of the Environment released a report which found that the air in Beachville, in my riding of Oxford, had higher than acceptable particulate levels. The report laid out a plan that included annual site inspections, reviews of industry reports and communications with our community, but your ministry won't give us any information.

1110

Minister, in my letter to you on the day that you were sworn in, I told you that I have asked for this information. I have now asked your ministry three times and haven't received a single response.

Minister, can you tell me and my constituents what your ministry has done to ensure that the air they are breathing is safe?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I think these are some of the most important questions that we as ministers get asked in the House. I respect my friend from Oxford for holding me and the government to account.

I apologize sincerely—I have only been the minister for a couple of weeks—that we did not get back to you. I have not personally seen your letter yet. I would ask—if you can take a few minutes after question period, I'd like to chat with you. I will go back to my office promptly after to review that letter and I will have an answer with you as soon as possible.

Again, I apologize we weren't able to get that—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Thank you, very much, Minister. Since you didn't address Beachville air quality in your response, I'm assuming, as you said, that you have not read the letter and also have not looked at the information.

People in my riding are depending on your ministry to ensure that the air they breathe is safe. It's not acceptable for the ministry to simply refuse to provide the information. What, if anything, has been done? And this is over a period since 2003.

Minister, will you commit to providing me within two weeks with a full package, including the results of the annual site inspections, review of industry reports and the steps that have been taken, and will you commit to work with us to ensure that the air quality in the Beachville area is safe for the people of Beachville?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I will go back to the ministry, find out what information I'm legally allowed to release, and I will certainly make sure that anything that I can release as minister without compromising the integrity of the ministry or the process—I will do that.

I'm very concerned about the air quality in Beachville, as we are across Ontario. The Premier and I this morning were with a large number of children, confirming the reintroduction of the end to coal act. As you know, that was the equivalent of taking all of the cars in Ontario, the seven million cars, off our roads and was the single biggest reduction in greenhouse gas emissions—but it was also one of the single biggest reductions in nitrous oxide and particulate matter. When I came back to Ontario in 2005 after being away, there were 53 smog days that year alone—53 days when it wasn't safe to go outside.

Interjection.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Pardon me?

Hon. Michael Chan: Now it's much better.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: This is obviously a great concern. It's one that I share with the member. It's certainly a priority to the government, and we'll work with you, sir, on that.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My question this morning is to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. Good morning, Minister. Congratulations on your new appointment.

Speaker, climate change is having a real impact on our province. Just last year we experienced the most expensive natural disaster in Ontario to date. But this government isn't taking the problem seriously. This morning, the Environmental Commissioner revealed that Ontario's emissions are set to rise. This government is not on track to meet its own emissions reduction targets for 2020. In fact, they'll miss the mark by almost 20%. As the Environmental Commissioner said, "The province has lost the leadership position it once had."

Will the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change explain why this government will fail to meet its own 2020 emissions reduction targets?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Just two points, quickly: One, I'd like to congratulate the member on his re-election and also his appointment as my critic. We seem to be paired up, and I'll look forward to many "Good mornings" and return them as well.

Let's just look at what reality is as opposed to projections. The reality is, it was confirmed in the last 24 hours that we will actually exceed our 2014 goals. We will actually reduce GHGs more than our plan called for.

The Premier obviously believes that more should be done, so we've become a government where there is a Minister of Climate Change, who is myself, to do what I think the Environmental Commissioner said: that stronger action is needed across multiple ministries, and that must be coordinated under the leadership of the Premier and myself working with her. I will get into some more detail

about what that will look like because we are determined to meet our 2020 goals.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Some would say it's one thing to rename a ministry and it's quite another to actually deliver on one's commitments.

We've heard today from the independent Environmental Commissioner that this government is not doing enough to cut greenhouse gas emissions and to address the impacts of climate change on our economy and on our communities. Worst of all, Ontario's transportation emissions reduction target has been cut by 80%. As the commissioner said, "I have been given no reason why, and no explanation about what the Ontario government plans to do instead."

Speaker, will the minister admit that this government is cutting its own targets because it has no plan to actually cut emissions by 2020?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, I try to be helpful with my advice to my friend, and the people who live in glass houses, especially these days, should not throw stones. We actually have a plan, and he may have noticed because we just came out of the election, their party was completely silent on the environment in their platform. I barely could find the words "climate change" in it.

I listened very carefully to the Environmental Commissioner and we're already moving on those things. The Environmental Commissioner was asked, in his press conference that I attended, what were the three things we could move on and what was his strongest advice for the government. He said, "First, transit and transportation." The Big Move: \$29 billion, and we started—and I will be working with Minister Duguid and Mr. Del Duca—on regional express rail. This will be the biggest shift, doubling the number of people on GO and electrifying our system. That is a huge commitment that will help us do that.

Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude by saying buildings, Places to Grow, new buildings—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

New question.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: The question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services, whom I'd like to congratulate on her new position.

Minister, as the proud member for Kingston and the Islands, I'm happy to report that I have learned that Community Living Kingston, located in my riding, has recently received new funding for an exciting project from the Ministry of Community and Social Services' developmental services innovation fund. This is one of the many new grants to various developmental service agencies across the province, all designed to support these agencies as they work to promote the inclusion and employment of adults with developmental disabilities and to improve services for individuals and families.

Developmental services in Ontario are undergoing an important transformation so that individuals can receive care closer to their families and friends and lead independent lives in inclusive communities.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister further explain the intent of the developmental services innovation fund and its investments in agencies across the province?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Thank you to the member for Kingston and the Islands for this question. I think as we've come to see her in action over the last few days, we know she's going to be a tremendous asset to this House, and in her new role, she will continue to serve her constituents.

So to the question: The member is right. The developmental services innovation fund is an example of an exciting step forward as we continue to strengthen the way we provide services to those with developmental disabilities. Supporting projects that promote inclusion and help people with developmental disabilities find meaningful work is part of the government's economic plan that is creating jobs for today and tomorrow. Our government is proud to support these innovative partnerships with agencies in Kingston and the Islands, as well as about 50 other ridings across the province. These investments will be a critical step in helping people with developmental disabilities gain employment and lead more enriched and fulfilling lives.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: A truly inclusive society is a goal that we all have a shared responsibility to work towards. I am pleased to share that a program known as Youth Connect, designed and implemented by Community Living Kingston, will benefit from an investment from the developmental services innovation fund. This project will develop social, recreational and employment opportunities for youth aged six to 22 who have a developmental disability. The target population is youth leaving school in the next few years and/or leaving the child welfare system.

Youth Connect will assist young people to explore interests and develop connections by accessing community resources, and provide coordinated support from volunteers and peers. Ten youth will have an opportunity to build and create a sustainable mentoring relationship.

1120

Mr. Speaker, can the minister share the other types of projects that the fund will invest in as well as other ranges of individuals who will benefit from these efforts?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: The DS innovation fund will support projects from across the province that encourage alternatives to traditional models of support. Examples of proposed initiatives include pre-employment training, volunteer matching and employer awareness initiatives.

As the member from Kingston and the Islands knows from her own riding, a portion of these funds will benefit youth transitioning from high school. Initiatives will also serve individuals with a range of needs and circumstances, including individuals who also have complex

health and physical challenges, and post-secondary students and other adults with developmental disabilities.

Building on this fund and other investments to date, the budget tabled on May 1, to be reintroduced next week, will propose an additional \$810 million over three years to further strengthen developmental services in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure members on all sides of this House want to support individuals with developmental disabilities. They can do that in a very practical way next week and vote for the budget.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Premier.

Premier, just over six months ago, the Auditor General issued a damning report of your government's fire sale of Ontario Northland. It said your ill-conceived plan would not save Ontario taxpayers \$265 million as you claimed, but would actually cost taxpayers \$820 million.

Now, despite widespread community opposition in northeastern Ontario, you're plowing ahead with the sale of ONTC's telecom arm, Ontera. Yesterday, you announced the termination of 70 employees of Ontera.

We know the Ontera sale will actually cost the taxpayer between \$50 million and \$70 million. Premier, how can you possibly proceed with the sale of Ontera at that cost when you're already running a \$12.5-billion deficit?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I appreciate the question. Let me remind the member and other members of the House that, before Premier Wynne came into office in February 2013, our approach, quite frankly, was to move forward with the full divestment of the ONTC. Premier Wynne asked us to look at that far more carefully and to consult with stakeholders in northeastern Ontario. We set up a ministerial advisory committee and did some substantial work and, a couple of months ago, made the announcement that four of the five lines of the Ontario Northland will be staying in public hands. They will continue to operate the motor coach, the refurbishment, the Polar Bear Express and rail freight. The decision was indeed that it made sense from a fiscal point of view.

May I say it's ironic that this member is asking the question, because he was quite supportive of privatization on a number of occasions?

The fact is that the decision to sell Ontera to Bell Aliant was made on the basis of what was in the best interests of a long-term, sustainable telecommunications network.

I look forward, in the supplementary, to providing some more details in that regard. But the bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is that—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: I'll remind you that you only changed your approach after we proved that there were no savings to the government.

Premier, this Ontera sale will actually cost you tens of millions of dollars and hurt the regional economy of northeastern Ontario. On top of this, your government stands idly by while Ontario Northland could be pursuing opportunities to refurbish rail tanker cars when the feds change their safety standards. That could add hundreds of jobs and add value to the government.

You still haven't given the transportation and telecom experts at ONTC a seat at the table with the Ring of Fire discussions. These are your experts in moving ore. They've been the experts in Ontario for over 100 years. Premier, call them; don't fire them.

Why do you refuse to recognize that Ontario Northland provides critical infrastructure for all of Ontario?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: We are extremely eager to move forward on a number of discussions, particularly related to the refurbishment opportunities. There are some synergies, we think, with Metrolinx which I haven't had an opportunity to have a brief discussion with the new Minister of Transportation about. We are indeed open to all kinds of interesting discussions related to the ONTC and its potential role in other operations in the north.

The fact is, the decision on Ontera was a tough one. The fact is that I think the private sector is far better equipped to handle the future sustainability of the operation.

It's always extremely difficult when ultimately discussions take place that result in any job losses at all, but this will ensure the long-term sustainability of the telecommunications side of the business and will allow us to focus very, very strongly on the transportation needs and infrastructure opportunities in northeastern Ontario which the ONTC gives us.

Keeping those four lines in public hands was great news for everybody in northeastern Ontario.

HAMILTON SPORTS STADIUM

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the minister responsible for infrastructure. Significant delays to the completion of Hamilton's Tim Hortons Field stadium were announced following a meeting of Hamilton city staff, the Tiger-Cats, Infrastructure Ontario and Ontario Sports Solutions, which, despite the name, is a foreign-led consortium to which the Ontario government gave the contract.

It's unconscionable that nothing appears to have been done between the government and its partners to coordinate a fix to the problem when this delay has been known about for months. This isn't just a venue waiting for the games to happen in 2015. The Hamilton stadium has tenants pre- and post-Pan/Parapan Games ready to use the building now.

Why did the Liberals fail to make the timely completion of the Hamilton stadium a priority?

Hon. Brad Duguid: It is unfortunate that the Ticats organization and fans will not be able to utilize that stadium for their first few games, but let's put this into perspective. The Ticats organization and Ticats fans are soon going to have a brand spanking new stadium—to be

able to run onto the field to as part of the investments that this government is making. I think everybody involved, including the Ticats organization, sees that as a fantastic way to ensure that the Ticats organization is sustainable going on into the future.

This delay will be short-term. Very soon, in the summer, we'll see the Ticats run into that stadium.

This is also an example of a learning moment, I think, for the NDP, who oppose AFP projects. Had this not been an AFP project, it would have been Ontario taxpayers who might have been on the hook for any delay costs. That will not happen because of the constructive way this has been put together.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: Maybe I can enlighten the minister. It's bad enough that the job has been completely mishandled, but I understand the Ticats will receive \$1 million per game for lost revenue because of the delayed opening that you're spouting about.

Ontario Sports Solutions has tried to prevent unionized workers from working on the Hamilton venue.

Interjection.

Mr. Paul Miller: From the first time, you should have done that.

And now we see the true impact of the government not requiring local and unionized workers to do the jobs they know best in Hamilton. You gave it to a foreign consortium.

Will this government finally see the ongoing errors of their ways and take immediate action to ensure that the Hamilton stadium gets completed at least by August 16 for their third game and that the other venues are readied on the other Pan Am venues, which are behind schedule too, which is going to cost the taxpayers of Ontario millions more dollars?

Hon. Brad Duguid: He's dead wrong, Mr. Speaker. Because this was done through an alternative financing procurement process, something the NDP is philosophically opposed to, this will not cost the taxpayers a cent, because any delay costs are at the expense of the proponent. That's important to state, because had we listened to the member opposite and his party in the way that they want to do projects, in the old-fashioned way, taxpayers may have been on the hook for that.

But the priority here is to ensure that that stadium is built as soon as possible. It will be. The Hamilton Tiger-Cats will be running onto that brand new field at some point this summer, we expect by the third game—as soon as possible.

The fact of the matter is, Hamilton and their football team are getting a brand new stadium, and the Ticats are getting it without having to put a penny forward. This is a good-news story for Hamilton despite what the member opposite is trying to lead people to believe.

GRAPE AND WINE INDUSTRY

Mr. Granville Anderson: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Across

the province, we are excited about the government's refreshed wine and grape strategy. This is a plan that will help build upon the success of the original strategy that supported growth in the wine sector, including doubling the number of VQA wineries, creating 2,000 direct jobs, record grape production, and the development of prime tourist destinations.

1130

My riding of Durham has two outstanding VQA wineries: Ocala Orchards Farm Winery in Scugog, and Archibald's Estate Winery in Clarington.

My constituents, along with residents across Ontario, want to know how the government will ensure a robust and competitive future for Ontario's wine and grape industry.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to congratulate the new member from Durham. Before he arrived here on June 12, the member from Durham had a very distinguished career as an education trustee with the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington separate school board. He did a tremendous job as an education leader in that role, and we welcome him here to Queen's Park.

I do know he wants me to answer his question, so I'll get to that. Last December, Premier Wynne was in Niagara to announce that Ontario is building on the success of its wine and grape strategy by investing up to \$75 million over five years to grow the province's wine industry. With the new wine and grape strategy, Ontario is investing in the success of the long-term sustainability of its wines by (1) establishing an Ontario wine fund that will create incentives for job creation investment; and (2) improving access to Ontario wines by launching a pilot project to allow VQA wines to be sold in farmers' markets—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Supplementary?

Mr. Granville Anderson: Thank you to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for the update. My constituents will be thrilled to hear that we are expanding the government's wine and grape strategy and particularly exploring VQA wine sales in farmers' markets.

In my riding of Durham we are fortunate to have many opportunities to shop locally, like the Uxbridge Farmers' Market, and help local producers and others committed to local food and local production market to our community. Many of my constituents are actively involved in a number of initiatives to expand opportunities in local food and marketing and would be interested to know how the wine and grape strategy will help support local food in Durham.

Will the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs please provide details on how this strategy will help to promote local food in Durham?

Hon. Jeff Leal: That was an outstanding supplementary. We're very committed to supporting the growth and expansion of Ontario's wine industry. As part of our wine and grape strategy, we've initiated a pilot project

that will allow VQA wines to be sold at farmers' markets across the province, including the outstanding Uxbridge Farmers' Market.

The pilot program will (1) make it easier for people to connect local food and the world-class wine made in this wonderful province; (2) create economic opportunities for Ontario's wineries; and (3) celebrate the VQA wines that are crafted entirely—entirely, Mr. Speaker—from Ontario-grown grapes, whether it's from Prince Edward county, the Niagara Peninsula or Pelee Island—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

I am going to come to a new question.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Robert Bailey: My question is to the new Minister of Government and Consumer Services. Minister, Ontario's regulatory burden continues to threaten jobs in Sarnia-Lambton. Specialized, long-service employees of the energy, refining and petrochemical sectors are facing the real prospect of job loss, and the industry is facing a potential for a critical labour shortage. At fault is a TSSA regulation that will force from their jobs—experienced men and women who have worked for decades operating steam-driven equipment with a special permit from your ministry under the TSSA. It will leave local industry short of labour and threaten operations.

Minister, Unifor, the union that represents these workers, is asking for a meeting with you and your ministry staff. Will you agree to meet with them before the summer is over?

Hon. David Orazietti: I want to first congratulate the member from Sarnia-Lambton for his re-election and thank him for the question.

He has asked a question about one of the nine delegated authorities that fall under our ministry's responsibility. As the member knows full well, the TSSA is an independent body that is self-regulating and self-funding—it receives no money from government—but I understand the question with respect to the specific training and the permitting around those particular engineers and operators.

I am certainly prepared to have a discussion with them, but I want to reinforce the point that public safety is paramount when it comes to TSSA activity. We obviously want to be reducing the burden to business; in fact, that's one of our key strategies in the plan to help grow the economy and support jobs in Ontario. I will also be meeting with the nine chairs and CEOs of the delegated authorities.

So, I'm happy to have a discussion to see where we can take this, because obviously we want to see people working in the province of Ontario.

ABSHIR HASSAN

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Eglinton-Lawrence on a point of order.

Mr. Mike Colle: Yes, a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to have a moment's silence and the lowering of the legislative flag for the unfortunate and sad murder of an elementary teacher the other day: Abshir Hassan.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Eglinton-Lawrence is seeking unanimous consent to have a moment's silence for the slain teacher. Do we agree?

We would ask all members of the House to please rise for a moment of silence.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1137 to 1500.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CITY OF SARNIA

Mr. Robert Bailey: I rise today to commemorate a very special anniversary year. On May 7, 1914, Sarnia officially became a corporation as the city of Sarnia. On that day a century ago, the Governor General of Canada at the time, Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught, along with his daughter Patricia, visited Sarnia to confer city status. That visit earned Sarnia's long-standing moniker, "The Imperial City."

This year, Sarnia marked the kickoff of its centennial celebration with yet another special visit, this time from the Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable David C. Onley. I attended that event with the Lieutenant Governor, and I'm very pleased to report that we were joined by a large crowd of community members and well-wishers to mark the occasion.

Situated on the sunny shore of Lake Huron and bordered by the azure St. Clair River to the west, Sarnia remains one of the best-kept secrets in Ontario—except, of course, for the 75,000 residents who proudly call Sarnia home.

As the member of provincial Parliament for Sarnia-Lambton, I encourage the members of this Legislature to join me in congratulating the residents of Sarnia on their proud history and extending the best wishes of this Legislature for Sarnia's next 100 years.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's my delight to announce that on July 6 it was His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 79th birthday. I celebrated it with almost 1,000 Tibetans—and, of course, Tibetans around the world celebrate it, as well as others.

We all know that in 1959 he left Tibet. He had to leave Tibet, and he has been working as an emissary for peace ever since—and for, of course, the autonomy and freedom of Tibetans.

That brings me to my second point, which is to respectfully ask, since the throne speech mentioned that the Premier is going to China on a trade mission, that she speak about human rights when she goes.

I was in Westminster just after the election, for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference. There, the Home Secretary's office said it quite clearly: The Premier of China was arriving, they signed a \$40-billion trade deal, but, he said, "We spoke about human rights."

Many governments and world leaders do exactly the same: speak about human rights when they do trade with China. That is all the Tibetans ask. That is all His Holiness the Dalai Lama asks. I would suggest that it might be a good birthday gift that the Premier could offer His Holiness the Dalai Lama: to do just that.

The Premier has talked about governing from the activist centre. Well, the activist centre talks not only about trade but also speaks about human rights.

ABSHIR HASSAN

Mr. Mike Colle: On July 7, Abshir Hassan was gunned down in cold blood as he was about to move his car outside his house to avoid getting a parking ticket. Detectives say that it was a case of clear mistaken identity. Two friends were also shot multiple times and are still in the hospital.

Abshir taught at one of my local schools, Lawrence Heights Middle School, where just two weeks ago we had attended graduation ceremonies that were filled with joy and happiness. Now the children have lost their hero, who spent a lifetime teaching and spending countless hours with the kids after school, mentoring them and running basketball games. He paid special attention to kids at risk, with whom he had a special bond.

Abshir himself grew up in Lawrence Heights, and still lived there and taught at the local school. His principal, David deBelle, whom I've worked with myself for over 15 years, recalled how the students would cheer when he wrote Abshir's name on the blackboard when he was going to be the teacher for the day—a rare thing. Principal deBelle called Abshir his "go-to guy." He was a very humble, loving teacher who wanted to help kids succeed and make it through the most difficult challenges.

This utterly horrendous assault and cowardly murder of Abshir Hassan is a loss that will deprive so many kids, fellow teachers, and family and friends of a most special and passionate man who loved to teach.

Rest in peace, Abshir.

ERNIE HUGHES

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure today to rise in this assembly and pay tribute to a very dear friend of mine: Ernie Hughes. Ernie is the president of our local Barrhaven Legion, one of the newest legions in all of Canada, with one of the highest memberships.

Just to attribute to his determination and steadfastness as one of its founders: Ernie served 28 years in the Canadian military, joining at the age of 16—first with the Royal Canadian Engineers, 55 Field Squadron, from 1963-64. After a long and distinguished career, he re-entered in 1988 and was promoted in 1990 to captain.

Ernie has done an awful lot for our Barrhaven community and, in fact, all of the city of Ottawa. I remember a few years ago when we were just building this brand new Legion right beside my constituency office and they didn't have a liquor licence. Ernie came to see me with all of the decorated veterans and he said, "I need you to call the minister." I called the minister—Sophia Aggelonitis at the time—and I said, "I have a number of veterans here who I don't want to have to put on the front page of the Ottawa Sun. Can we get them their liquor licence so they can open tonight?" Sure enough, we were able to work together to get that open.

I wanted to say today to Ernie and all members of the Barrhaven Legion how proud I am of them.

Just to list a few of the distinguished medals that Mr. Hughes has—I would like to just read them off. He has: a commissioning scroll; the 125th Anniversary of the Confederation of Canada Medal; the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal; the Canadian Forces Decoration, with bar; Corrections Exemplary Service Medal, with bar; a Service Medal of the Order of St. John, with bar—Speaker, I could stand here for another 10 minutes to list off all of the great contributions that Ernie Hughes has made to this province. That's why I am so proud to put his name in the official record in Hansard here in this Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Ernie.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Ms. Catherine Fife: Last Thursday I attended an event in Waterloo called Cause We Care, to raise awareness about the need to eliminate sex trafficking in Kitchener–Waterloo. Sex trafficking is a hidden crime but it happens in communities right across Ontario. There are few reliable local, provincial or federal statistics to demonstrate the scale of the problem, but we need to start paying closer attention.

In 2012, the 401 corridor was identified as a growing hub for the trafficking and transportation of victims.

Just last month a study from the Alliance Against Modern Slavery found that between January 2011 and December 2013, 551 cases of human trafficking involving Ontario as a source, transit or destination point were reported.

In Waterloo region, police believe the average age of victims is between 12 and 22. Fewer than 1% of people being trafficked receive support or have access to social services. This is why the Waterloo Regional Police Service, medical services and social services have come together to form an anti-human trafficking task force to identify and protect victims of sex trafficking. They should be commended for their innovative and collaborative work.

We are not doing enough to protect victims. We should look to agency leaders like Timea Nagy from Walk With Me, an agency that piloted a first-response model tailored to victims of human trafficking.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to support more than 1% of victims when this government has failed to deliver even half of the \$2 million that the Attorney General promised in 2011. We must do more. All of us must understand the scope of human trafficking in our communities, and protect and nurture those who have been victimized.

MILTON STRAWBERRY FAIR

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Sometimes it's the little things in life that can have a big impact on our communities and our quality of life. I was reminded of this recently by a visit to an event. I've been living in Halton for more than 20 years, and for most of those years I've been dropping by a fair that happens just a few blocks from my home. It never disappoints. People young and old come from all over to this wonderful little fair. They get up early, get in line, and keep coming in the hundreds and sometimes thousands. Why? Well, they come out for a very simple reason: strawberries. Yes, those bright, red, plump berries that are bursting with flavour are the centrepiece of Milton's annual strawberry fair. There are always baskets of strawberries, strawberry ice cream, strawberry slushies, even strawberry pancakes. It's a celebration of the berry.

I recently had the privilege of attending the 34th annual strawberry fair at the Milton Fairgrounds, and it was a perfect day. Every year the Milton District Hospital Auxiliary raises funds for the Milton District Hospital by putting on a strawberry fair. The funds raised go towards equipment that our local hospital needs.

The strawberries always taste better—better than you've ever eaten. They're ripe, crisp, fresh and, well, simply delicious. I don't know why these berries taste sweeter but I think it's knowing that with every bite you take, you're giving something back to our community and our hospital.

EVENTS IN PERTH–WELLINGTON

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Today I want to recognize some of the outstanding festivals in Perth–Wellington. On May 26 I had the privilege of attending the opening of the 62nd season of the Stratford Festival. The Stratford Festival has captivated audiences, showcasing classical and contemporary theatre since 1953.

1510

Last Friday, I attended a wonderful opening night performance at the Drayton Festival Theatre. Drayton Entertainment is one of Canada's most successful professional theatre companies, with a 22-year history of excellent productions at seven venues across southwestern Ontario.

In Perth–Wellington, we also are fortunate to have so many arts festivals. Stratford Summer Music will open

on July 14, showcasing six weeks of diverse and exciting music. Every year, I try to attend their opening night, but that may not be possible this year because of the Legislature's unusual July session.

SpringWorks is an indie theatre and arts festival. They had a mix of incredible works for the month of May.

I am proud to support all the cultural attractions that I represent and advocate for them. Many of them asked the government to renew the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund. I have contacted the government on five separate occasions for an update. I hope the new minister will respond soon.

Finally, I want to invite everyone—MPPs, their families and all those listening today—to visit Perth–Wellington this summer.

BIG MUSIC FEST

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with you today some very exciting news concerning the city of Kitchener. For the first time ever this weekend, Kitchener is going to be hosting the Big Music Fest. This is going to be an annual music festival, we hope, taking place in McLennan Park. It is a weekend-long event that is going to attract thousands of music fans to the city of Kitchener. They will see a variety of internationally acclaimed artists, including Aerosmith, Bryan Adams, Collective Soul and Kim Mitchell. They heard about what a great city Kitchener is and they wanted to come entertain us.

As the member of provincial Parliament for Kitchener Centre, I'm also proud to be part of a government that recognizes the value in the arts and tourism by investing in these cultural events.

Mr. Speaker, not only am I a fan of good music, as you witnessed moments ago, notwithstanding the year I spent listening to disco, but I'm also a supporter of the tremendous positive economic influence that this brings to our community and our local economy. Now many local business owners and service providers in Kitchener are going to see the benefit. It's estimated that the Big Music Fest is going to generate up to \$20 million in local economic activity, boosting revenues for hotels, restaurants and small businesses across the city.

Again, I'm proud to be part of a government that recognizes the value in supporting the arts, culture and tourism to our community.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. What's wrong with disco?

TORONTO RIBFEST

Mr. Yvan Baker: Last week, as we all celebrated Canada Day, I was particularly proud, not only as a Canadian and as a resident of Etobicoke, but as a member of the Rotary Club of Etobicoke, and I'd like to share with this House why that is.

Last week, I had the pleasure of participating in the 15th annual Toronto Ribfest held at Centennial Park in

my riding of Etobicoke Centre. Toronto Ribfest is organized by the Rotary Club of Etobicoke and is a wonderful event for people for all ages. From June 27 to July 1, Centennial Park hosted two stages, along with all kinds of entertainment, a free Kidz Zone, Toronto's largest mobile midway and the best selection of ribs I have ever seen.

On Canada Day, I had the opportunity to participate in a citizenship ceremony, after which I had the honour of volunteering, along with a wonderful team of Rotarians and others, who were dedicating their time to putting this event on. Toronto Ribfest is so large it attracts hundreds of thousands of people over the weekend and requires about 1,200 four-hour shifts of volunteers to put on, and it raises hundreds of thousands of dollars. All of the money raised goes, via Rotary Etobicoke, into supporting community activities and humanitarian organizations in Etobicoke and around the world.

Rotary Etobicoke is made up of men and women who all have a common value of service above self, a value that I remind myself of every day as I stand here in this Legislature. I'd like to congratulate the Toronto Ribfest committee, chaired by Hugh Williams and Justin Di Ciano, Rotary Etobicoke and its members for a successful event. Thank you for your leadership in making our community even stronger. Through your work, you continue to make contributions and you demonstrate your commitment to service above self. I'm proud to be Canadian and proud to be a Rotarian.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ENDING COAL FOR CLEANER AIR ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR L'ABANDON DU CHARBON POUR UN AIR PLUS PROPRE

Mr. Murray moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 9, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act to require the cessation of coal use to generate electricity at generation facilities / Projet de loi 9, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection de l'environnement pour exiger la cessation de l'utilisation du charbon pour produire de l'électricité dans les installations de production.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, I just would like to thank a few people, if I may, rather than make a statement. I would just like to thank the member from St. Catharines, from whom so many good things have come, for his tireless work on this legislation. I'd like to thank the Premier, and former Premier McGuinty—this

is a pretty historic piece of legislation, celebrating a great accomplishment—and also thank my colleagues opposite and members of the Legislature for their thoughtful support of this and other legislation.

PETITIONS

CREDIT UNIONS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here, signed by a great number of people in the province of Ontario, and it is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario's economy and create jobs in three ways:

"—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

"—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

"—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries."

I affix my signature, Mr. Speaker, as I agree with this petition.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

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"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

I'll affix my name to this—I certainly agree with it—and give it to page Eric to take up to the Clerk.

MINIMUM WAGE

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly supporting the Fair Minimum Wage Act.

"Whereas the Ontario government has raised minimum wage by 50% since 2003 and will increase it to \$11, the highest provincial minimum wage in Canada, on June 1;

"Whereas both families and businesses in Ontario deserve a fair and predictable approach to setting the minimum wage;

"Whereas indexing minimum wage to CPI is supported by business, labour and anti-poverty groups from across Ontario as the best way to achieve that;

"Whereas indexing ensures minimum wage keeps pace with the cost of living, providing fairness for workers and their families and predictability for businesses to plan and stay competitive;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario pass and enact, as soon as possible, Bill 165, Fair Minimum Wage Act, 2014."

I fully support their petition. I will give my petition to page William.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the government of Ontario's newly created Ontario College of Trades is planning to hit hard-working tradespeople with membership fees that, if the college has its way, will add up to \$84 million a year; and

"Whereas the Ontario College of Trades has no clear benefit and no accountability as tradespeople already pay for licences and countless other fees to government; and

"Whereas Ontario has struggled for years to attract people to skilled trades and the planned tax grab will kill jobs and drive people out of trades;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To stop the job-killing trades tax and shut down the Ontario College of Trades immediately."

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

SENIOR CITIZENS' HOUSING

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from the residents of Beaches–East York. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care ... has changed its policy on how seniors living in supportive housing are served; and

"Whereas, due to this ... policy of the Ontario government, seven senior homes in York region" have closed "their on-site alternative community living programs" since April 1 of this year, "leaving 200 long-time residents living in these homes without the on-site continuous care they have been receiving from dedicated workers that have served them for years; and

"Whereas the on-site proactive and responsive care" has been "replaced by a hub-and-spoke reactive care model relying on seniors themselves initiating calls for help" with "a response time of 15 minutes ... because the caregiver is not on-site but in a mobile unit...;

"Whereas the closure of the on-site" services is leading to "inadequate care to meet the true needs of the ... residents and" is resulting "in undue hardship on residents and their families;"

They "petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario" to ask the government to reverse its decision to close "the alternative community living programs in seven seniors' and retirement homes in York region and that the government" reverse "the transfer of on-site continuous and proactive care to a reactive call with 15 minutes' delay for care that will lower the quality of life for seniors and residents in the seven affected homes."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Émilie to bring it to the Clerk.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Arthur Potts: This is a petition regarding the Sheppard East subway extension.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Scarborough residents north of Ontario Highway 401 and east of Don Mills are without a rapid transit option; and

"Whereas a strong transit system is critical for increasing economic development and tackling income disparity; and

"Whereas this geographical area continues to grow and the demand for strong rapid transit continues to increase; and

"Whereas Sheppard Avenue is a major artery for automobile traffic for commuters travelling from suburbs to downtown Toronto, and travelling from suburb to suburb; and

"Whereas ground-level rapid transit would increase traffic, restrict lanes for automobiles, and add further risk for pedestrians and commuters at dangerous intersections along Sheppard Avenue; and

"Whereas demands for underground rapid transit along Sheppard Avenue have been part of public discourse for over 50 years; and

"Whereas the province of Ontario previously approved a plan from the city of Toronto to extend the Sheppard subway line from Downsview to Scarborough Centre; and

"Whereas an extension to the Sheppard subway line will require contributions and co-operation from the city of Toronto, the province of Ontario and the government of Canada;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To support the extension of the Sheppard subway line east to Scarborough Centre; and

"To call upon" the government of Canada "to contribute multi-year funding for the construction and operation of an extension to the Sheppard subway line."

I sign my name to this petition. I fully support it. I will leave it with Katie, our page.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Winchester District Memorial Hospital provides essential health" care "services to the residents of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry and was awarded 'accreditation with exemplary standing'—the highest award by Accreditation Canada earlier this year; and

"Whereas the projected increase in Ontario's senior population demands that facilities have the resources and capacity required to accommodate increasing demand; and

"Whereas Ontarians cherish access to high-quality local health care; and

"Whereas the recent closure of 14 beds at the" Winchester District Memorial Hospital "and the loss of over nine full-time skilled staff positions at a time when Ontario has experienced unemployment above the national average for" more than "seven consecutive years are the result of ongoing silent funding cuts that are threatening our cherished health care system;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately reinstate adequate funding levels for the Winchester District Memorial Hospital that would allow the reopening of local beds and the rehiring of local qualified front-line health staff."

I agree with this and will be signing it and passing it on to page Stephanie.

PRIX DE L'ESSENCE

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'ai une pétition qui me parvient des gens de Nickel Belt et de Sudbury au sujet du prix de l'essence.

« Alors que les automobilistes du nord de l'Ontario continuent d'être soumis à des fluctuations marquées dans le prix de l'essence; et

« Alors que la province pourrait éliminer les prix abusifs et opportunistes et offrir des prix justes, stables et prévisibles; et

« Alors que cinq provinces et de nombreux états américains ont déjà une réglementation des prix d'essence; et

« Considérant que les juridictions qui réglementent le prix de l'essence ont : moins de fluctuations des prix, moins d'écarts de prix entre les communautés urbaines et rurales et des prix d'essence annualisés inférieurs. »

Ils demandent à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario : « D'accorder à la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario le mandat de surveiller le prix de l'essence partout en Ontario afin de réduire la volatilité des prix et les différences de prix régionales, tout en encourageant la concurrence. »

Je suis d'accord avec cette pétition. Je vais la signer, et je demande à la page Katie de l'amener à la table des greffiers.

CREDIT UNIONS

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario's economy and create jobs in three ways:

—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries."

I agree with this petition and I will send it down with Eric.

1530

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Scarborough residents north of Ontario Highway 401 and east of Don Mills are without a rapid transit option; and

"Whereas a strong transit system is critical for increasing economic development and tackling income disparity; and

"Whereas this geographical area continues to grow and the demand for strong rapid transit continues to increase; and

"Whereas Sheppard Avenue is a major artery for automobile traffic for commuters travelling from suburbs to downtown Toronto, and travelling from suburb to suburb; and

"Whereas ground-level rapid transit would increase traffic, restrict lanes for automobiles, and add further risk for pedestrians and commuters at dangerous intersections along Sheppard Avenue; and

"Whereas demands for underground rapid transit along Sheppard Avenue have been part of public discourse for over 50 years; and

"Whereas the province of Ontario previously approved a plan from the city of Toronto to extend the Sheppard subway line from Downsview to Scarborough Centre; and

"Whereas an extension to the Sheppard subway line will require contributions and co-operation from the city of Toronto, the province of Ontario and the government of Canada;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To support the extension of the Sheppard subway line east to Scarborough Centre; and

"To call upon the government of Canada to contribute multi-year funding for the construction and operation of an extension to the Sheppard subway line."

I fully support the petition and I will give my petition to page Ethan. Thank you.

BREASTFEEDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that was collected by Marc Laferrière from Brantford. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Health Canada, the Canadian Paediatric Society and the World Health Organization recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life with continued breastfeeding along with other food sources for up to two years and beyond for optimal health;

"Whereas breastfeeding is normal and natural but like childbirth it can be complicated, requiring specialized support for a family's success;

"Whereas lactation consultants are trained, internationally certified breastfeeding specialists who can assist women having breastfeeding problems, and be resources of breastfeeding expertise in the community;

"Whereas Brantford, until 2005 when the service was cut, had a breastfeeding clinic run by lactation consultants at Brantford General Hospital which was highly utilized;"

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to facilitate the reinstatement of a lactation consultant-led breastfeeding clinic in Brantford General Hospital.

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask ma bonne page, Émilie, de l'amener à la table des greffiers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Resuming the debate adjourned on July 9, 2014, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): We'll continue with the questions and answers for the presentation by the member from Davenport. The official opposition has the first two minutes on her speech today—two-minute responses.

The member from Chatham-Kent-Essex.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you very much, Speaker. Again, I'd like to congratulate the member from Davenport on being newly elected. I know that it's an honour and a privilege to be here in these hallowed, sacred walls within the Ontario Legislature to in fact represent the people who put you here to do a job. I congratulate you on that. Whether it was your first time canvassing and knocking on doors, it's always an experience. Every day when you knock on a door, it's like Christmas: You just don't know what's behind it. That is so true. But again, I congratulate you and your team for being here. I know that we'll work together well. You being government, me being in opposition, that's quite all right.

Ideally, when we come into the Ontario Legislature as newly elected members of provincial Parliament, we have these wonderful ideals on how we're going to change the world. One of the things I've learned is that the wheels of progress turn slowly; very slowly. First you have the reading, the introduction of a bill. It goes through first and then second reading. It's debated all the way through, the pros and cons, and you're hoping that that bill will in fact pass second reading to get it into committee. Then you just wonder—as I was told once when I had my first bill introduced into this wonderful Legislature, it might go in blue, but it might come out purple or green or whatever colour. You just don't know, with all the amendments that may come out. It might be

slightly different, but it does come out eventually. Of course, then it's debated at third reading, and Lord willing, it receives royal assent, having passed third reading. That's one of the ideal things that I look forward to and that I'm sure you'll look forward to as well.

I encourage you, again, to remember who put you in this place and to continually work hard for them. Congratulations.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is also a pleasure to add my two minutes to the comments that were made by the newly minted MPP from Davenport and to congratulate her on being elected. We are members of select few—there are 107 of us. We are the leadership of our province and should behave as such.

You are new to this House. Some of us are more experienced—

Interjection: Seasoned.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Seasoned. Thank you. I was looking for a word that avoided “old.”

You bring a breath of fresh air. You have just, like most of us, spent a lot of time connecting with your constituents, talking to them, listening to what their needs are, and you shared quite a bit of that with us during your speech. So it is important now to follow through.

Sure, we are there to represent the wishes of the people back at the Legislative Assembly, but we are also there to bring the programs and services of the provincial government back to the people who elected us, to make sure that when a family or an individual or a business in your riding has an issue or an idea or a need for a program, service or a grant from the provincial government, you bring that back.

We spend a lot of time here talking about half of what an MPP job is about. We spend a lot of time talking about how we will represent the views and wishes of our constituents back at Queen's Park. We spend a whole lot less time on what I think is the most important job of an MPP, which is to make sure that you are available to the people who elected you so that they gain access to programs, services, grants etc. of the provincial government.

Congratulations on your election. I'll look forward to working with you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It really is a pleasure to join the debate today and pass some comments on the maiden speech by the new member for Davenport.

As all members here know—those who have been here a while—this is a very, very partisan place. Sometimes it can become overly partisan. But there are times when the House suspends its partisanship, and that is most often reserved for when a member is making their maiden speech and we get to learn a little bit more about them as a person and we concentrate a lot less on them as a politician, whether they have a different political philosophy from ours. What we learn about those people when they make their maiden speech is fascinating. I

think that's something we don't do enough of in this House: talk to each other, understand each other, perhaps probe each other's backgrounds a little bit and find out the wealth of knowledge that each of us have.

What I found out about the member for Davenport, first and foremost, is that she's a very proud mom. She has two kids, André and David, who I'm sure are equally as proud of her on the occasion of her election, and somebody else who I know is very, very proud, and that is her husband, Fernando. I think the entire family feels a sense of pride when somebody in their family is elected to represent the community.

In this case, the member for Davenport also told us about a terrific career she's had in the pharmaceutical business. From the health care end of things, she brings a wealth of knowledge that a lot of us just simply wouldn't have.

She's very, very proud of her Portuguese heritage, but not only that, she is actually quadrilingual—she speaks Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, French and English. I don't know what you call somebody that speaks five languages, but that would be the member for Davenport.

She's very, very proud of what happens in her neighbourhood, in Davenport, and obviously we all know that as the home of all sorts of festivals. It's part of the multicultural fabric of what is southern Ontario.

I'm standing today, on behalf of our caucus, to tell the member for Davenport how proud we are to have her in our caucus and to be a part of us all here at Queen's Park.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments.

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Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I, too, would like to join the chorus of welcomes to the member for Davenport. It's so nice to see another woman in the House. Hopefully, together we can start working and encouraging some more spirited collegial efforts in achieving what is right for Ontario.

I do appreciate the fact that a maiden speech is something you won't ever forget. It's an opportunity for you to reach out, recognize your family and give thanks to those who helped you get here.

I guess that's what I would like to focus on right now: that you can never, ever forget about your riding. It's your number one priority.

I'd like to take this moment to actually reach out to Huron-Bruce and also say thank you to everyone at home for supporting me again in this particular election. As you know, I care very much. Huron-Bruce matters, and we're going to work very, very hard and continue at a local level to make sure that your voice is heard here at Queen's Park.

Just like your team that helped you get here from Davenport, I too have a team. Lynn, Janet, Sarah and, just recently, Diane, thank you for all you do. You'll come to recognize that you can't do it by yourself. I suggest to the member for Davenport to appreciate and work with your team and share as much as you can with

them because it's a different world here, but it's a very good world, and we can make a difference.

We also heard recently that there's a lot of partisanship here, and it made me think of the throne speech, where your government said that we should have more partnership rather than partisanship. This is my opportunity to suggest to the Liberal government that it would be lovely for your government to walk your talk and maybe get moving on some committees. I know our House leader has worked very diligently, and we look to a good result.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Davenport has two minutes.

Mrs. Cristina Bento Martins: I want to thank the members from Oakville, Nickel Belt, Huron-Bruce and, most especially, the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex. I say "especially" because that is the riding that my in-laws call home. It is the riding that welcomed my husband's family when they came to Canada from Portugal. I'm very familiar with the community there and some of the landmarks in Chatham. Thank you all for your kind words and for your warm welcome to this house.

I look forward to working with all members to ensure that we deliver, on a timely basis, on our promises and that we deliver on our commitment to building Ontario up by building the potential of every child, building new transit, building more competitive industries, and building a fair and inclusive society that is diverse in talent and experience.

It is definitely a privilege and honour for me to be a member of the 41st Parliament of Ontario, and I would like to single out the firsts. This is the first Parliament to elect more women to this chamber than any other Parliament before. Our government is led by the first female Premier elected in the history of our province. I am the first woman elected to represent the riding of Davenport, and I am the first Portuguese Canadian woman to be elected as a member of the Ontario Liberal government. I'm very proud to represent this government here.

I would like to just reiterate once again, and I think it was said by members on both sides, our working collaboratively. That's exactly what I intend to do. We have a lot of issues, a lot of things to work on, and I think that it is working as a team that we can ensure that we keep building Ontario up and that we are working for the constituents who got us here, and we definitely cannot forget that.

I just wanted to reiterate once again that I'm very humbled and honoured by the people of Davenport electing me to be here and be your voice.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Before I begin, I just want to indicate that I'll be sharing my time with the member for Chatham-Kent-Essex.

I rise today in response to the throne speech. It is my first opportunity to formally thank the voters of York-Simcoe for once again giving me the privilege of rep-

resenting them. To take a seat in this chamber, to form the 41st Parliament, is indeed both awe-inspiring and humbling.

Many years ago in our parliamentary history, a throne speech was the opportunity to have the monarch of the day lay out the vision and the plans to execute it. Today, however, the throne speech reflects the skeletons of the previous Parliament: the debt climbing to \$300 billion; debt carrying charges greater than any ministry, except health and education; and ongoing police investigations surrounding the current government. The throne speech is, unfortunately, a chilling reminder of the challenges that have been brushed aside in the past decade, including living within our means as a province, spending restraint and servicing the debt.

Having been an MPP since 1995 this has given me extensive knowledge of my riding and of voters' concerns, and has given me a deep understanding of issues of a local nature. My constituents want to see the government focused on job creation, transportation, highways, health care, education, and safe communities. They are the people who get in their cars every morning—as I refer to them, the 7-a.m.-to-7-p.m. citizens. But the throne speech falls short of addressing the priorities that they have. These are issues that every family can relate to. When we look at the question of the financial position of the province, it becomes obvious to them that most people who have a credit card know the implication of not paying what you owe—you must pay interest on the money you have borrowed. This interest can grow and grow until the person can no longer afford to pay their bills. In extreme cases, this leads to bankruptcy. This is the danger of debt carrying charges. They can continue to climb until they are out of control, and before you know it, you can't even pay the interest, let alone the purchases.

We as a province also have to face our financial problems and do our best to solve them so that we can live in prosperity. If we continue digging ourselves into the fiscal hole, pretty soon we will be looking up and wondering how it got so deep.

The throne speech promises another \$5.7 billion worth of new programs with money we don't have. It also builds a record \$12.5-billion deficit.

Economist Jack Mintz has said that if interest rates, which have been at 20-year-low levels, rise, the debt burden will become significantly heavier. And if interest rates rise to even historical norms, each point increase in interest could add a minimum of \$3 billion in annual interest payments. That would severely cripple Ontario's ability to deliver services. Too often, people hear this and don't realize that every dollar that goes on interest payments is a dollar that is taken out of the programs and the ministries and the work that they do and out of their ability to use.

The Premier claims that she can eliminate the deficit in three years, and in the same breath she promises to spend billions more of taxpayers' money. That is not responsible. Where does the Premier expect the extra money to come from? Clearly, the math is not adding up, and people are catching on.

In response to the throne speech, Moody's downgraded Ontario's credit rating to negative. What does the Liberal government think of this catastrophe? The Minister of Finance was quoted as saying, "The bankers aren't freaking here." Furthermore, the new President of the Treasury Board also said, "I wouldn't say I'm worried about it." Well, Ministers, I can tell you that if you aren't freaking about it, most Ontarians are, including me. Also, I would say that this is worrisome, unlike the new President of the Treasury Board, who does not seem to mind that Ontario is in a fiscal crisis.

What this means is that, increasingly, the ability to borrow becomes further and further out of reach, and with it, that ability to borrow, comes the price tag as the interest rate climbs because of the instability of this government's financial plan.

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The throne speech is evidence that the Liberal government is out of touch with the daily lives of Ontarians. It focuses on issues that seem remote from people's everyday lives, such as increasing the oversight of the Ontario Ombudsman and the sale of assets.

When my constituents see these priorities, they do not see a government that is working to improve their daily lives. Instead, they see a government that is backpedalling, trying to fix problems they themselves created. Well, Mr. Speaker, my constituents can see through this throne speech and understand that the Liberal government is not doing anything to make their lives better. What they do see is a government doing the opposite: imposing new taxes on businesses that are already having a tough time.

The newly proposed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan would be a disaster for small businesses and their employees. A recent survey by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business reports that 86% of their membership opposes a retirement pension plan. It's estimated that Ontario would add about half a percentage point to its unemployment rate if it implemented the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan and it would mean a permanent drop in wages. It would take money out of people's paycheques and possibly take away their jobs. This is not a path we can afford to go down right now.

I take my role as critic for retirement security very seriously, and I have been studying this issue for some time. Never have I heard a stakeholder propose a provincial retirement savings plan. There are other vehicles through which Ontarians can save money for retirement that do not pose a threat to business, and these are the types of solutions that should be seriously considered.

People are looking for a government to provide leadership on such issues as balancing the interests of an aging population, an education system that will meet the needs of our children and young people, and fiscal prudence, not spending money you don't have. People want fairness, not slush funds. People want safety and health initiatives that provide security, not red tape and administrative fees that strangle initiative. People want a future that recognizes the legitimacy of all our citizens, not government by special interest groups.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Oh, sorry. She's sharing her time. The member from Chatham-Kent-Essex.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's an honour again to rise, this time for my second term. I would like to congratulate all members of this establishment for either their election or being re-elected. Of course, Speaker, I do look forward to representing the constituents in my riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex one more time, and I do appreciate the opportunity.

I also, though, would like to thank my family, because, as we know, as members of provincial Parliament, it takes a lot of family support to allow us to do the job that we do here to the best of our ability, not only in Toronto, but also back in our home ridings. So I want to give a special shout-out and a thank you to my wife, who has supported me for 37 years, most recently here in the 40th and now 41st Parliament, as well as my children, Jeff and his wife, Leslie, and my two grandchildren, Nathan and Calvin, who probably wonder, "What's Papa up to these days?" and also my son Kris, and my daughter Brooke, who lives with me here in Toronto.

I also want to thank my campaign team and my campaign manager, Sue Adamson, for being so well organized. We had a well-organized, well-oiled machine back in Chatham-Kent as we endeavoured to win, and we were successful in doing so.

Again, Speaker, I'd like to congratulate you on being appointed Speaker for a second term, so congratulations to you as well.

Traditionally, the speech from the throne centres mostly around future actions of the government. In the speech, the Liberals made special reference to the gas plant scandal and, of course, the committee responsible for overseeing it. The line, like the entirety of the throne speech, was carefully drafted by Liberal officials.

It's very important to look between the lines on these speeches, though: "Your government will take steps to allow the justice committee to write its report." The word "allow" stands out. It's never encouraging to see a government use the words "allow" and "justice" so close together on one day. What that statement really means is that the Liberals, taking full advantage of their majority, will order their MPPs on the committee to shut down the investigation and write a support.

One of the things that I've sensed since being back—and I say this to all within this Legislature, because when you're in a majority government, you can maybe develop an attitude of arrogance. What I want to suggest is that humility reigns supreme over arrogance. I would ask that all parties remain humble in their roles so that we can all work together for the betterment of everyone who in fact put us in this position of leading Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, this is a governing Liberal Party that blatantly disregarded repeated recommendations of the Ontario Chief Electoral Officer to simply get in line with

the rest of the country when it comes to election advertising. Ignoring officials of the Legislature is becoming a theme.

Earlier this week, I brought forth in question period a reference with regard to third-party advertising. The Premier did respond to my question, but not in the way that I'd hoped. She referenced the legislation they had passed with regard to third parties or special interest groups registering, and if they in fact had contributed \$5,000 or more, then they had to be registered. Well, that's one thing. Of course, I'm still wondering, who is Project Ontario?

However, what they didn't do, and what I was asking her more specifically, was to put a limit on the amount of third party advertising that special interest groups can in fact spend during a writ period. To me, if they don't put a limit on it, then that is a blatant disregard of democracy in this province. I think that that's wrong; I think that that is absolutely wrong.

I also want to take a moment and mention the ongoing investigation into the gas plant cancellation and following scandal. It's important to note one of the most common responses I received at the door over the past several weeks: anger over the Liberal government's waste of tax dollars in this scandal. While elections are certainly a stressful time for all candidates, they allow members to engage directly with the people of their riding and discuss what matters most to them. Going door to door was perhaps one of the most enjoyable parts of the campaign. Not only did I enjoy talking to people, but I lost weight—and I'm sure we all did as well. But you know what? It's a reminder of the importance of representing the people of our ridings in this Legislature. You get to hear a lot of opinions from voters, both supportive and critical. As I mentioned earlier in this session, it's kind of like Christmas. You just don't know what's behind each door that you go to.

A majority of your constituents will not vote for you; I know that. But you serve them all equally. I take great pride in making myself accessible and accountable, in a very non-partisan way.

What I heard at the door from many seniors and many other constituents was that after a decade of wasteful spending and scandal, they just didn't want the Liberals to get their hands on their pension dollars. Well, the people of Chatham-Kent-Essex firmly said no to this payroll tax. After countless instances of fiscal mismanagement within this government, and a complete lack of oversight in so many crucial areas, it's easy to understand why.

My riding has been hit hard since the Liberals took power in 2003, losing over 10,000 manufacturing jobs. That's put a tremendous strain on many of our communities, not only in my riding but throughout Ontario. The businesses that remain, both large and small, continue to tell me that they can barely pay the bills as it is. Adding an additional "payroll tax," which is what I call it, on the riding and on a region that has been so deeply hurt by job losses just doesn't make sense to me.

The people of Chatham-Kent-Essex have sent me to Queen's Park with a job to do, a job that I will do, and that is to hold the government accountable and to ensure that the province handles its debt crisis. And trust me, Speaker, we are in a crisis situation.

I was actually really hopeful that the throne speech would signal that the government is ready to take matters more seriously and start to balance the budget. Instead, the government is reusing the same budget from the spring, which will add to Ontario's debt and deficit. By delaying action for another year, government will be forced to take more drastic steps to balance the budget by their promised goal of 2017-18.

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About the only thing that's fiscally responsible in this budget is the fact that they won't have to reprint it.

On the very day that the speech from the throne was read, Moody's Investors Service lowered the outlook on Ontario's debt rating, to negative from stable, citing concerns with the province's ability to eliminate a \$12.5-billion deficit by 2017 as scheduled.

If Ontario's debt rating is downgraded, it's going to cost the province billions of tax dollars every single year—money that we didn't have to spend. It's going to cost more and more, and I'll add that the people of Ontario don't even get a Christmas card with all that additional spending.

Mr. Speaker, please allow me to read into the record an important quote from the Financial Post: "Each additional point increase in Ontario's interest rate will add another \$3 billion in interest cost on gross debt." That was from Jack Mintz, on June 10, 2014. That's more than 10 times the 2013 budget for the entire municipality of Chatham-Kent, gone in the blink of an eye or the snap of a finger.

It would be absolutely shameful to lose that amount of public money when so many projects go unfunded and services are being clawed back.

They talk about infrastructure and the need for infrastructure. I just have one very simple question: Where will they get the money? I wish they could tell me that answer. Please do not put it on the backs of my children and my grandchildren. To me, that is totally unacceptable.

The throne speech also makes a claim that government should be a force in people's lives. Well, the people of Chatham-Kent know all too well what happens when a Liberal government wants to be a force in people's lives. The Liberals forever altered the beautiful landscape of Chatham-Kent-Essex when they forced nearly 500 industrial wind turbines into our communities.

What do we have to show for it? Energy bills continue to grow for families and local businesses who can't afford it. Rising energy costs are killing families and killing businesses. When businesses leave a community, jobs leave, and of course unemployment skyrockets. That's what's happening throughout Ontario.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to reiterate the fact that it is an honour to serve the people of Chatham-

Kent-Essex in the 41st Parliament of Ontario. I look forward to working hard, on behalf of my constituents, to hold this government to account, bringing good jobs back to our communities and ensuring a more prosperous future for future generations.

Back in the days prior to my being involved with politics, I was in the training and development business. Of course, one of the programs that I taught and trained and practise to this day is from a book entitled *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, by Dale Carnegie.

Interjection.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: To the member across—by the way, I want to congratulate you on your run for Speaker; I truly do.

Do you know what? One of the things that I felt, again, realizing that I'm not even in a majority or a minority situation—they're in a majority situation—is that in order for me to get things done within my riding, for the people of my riding, I need to be able to work arm in arm, hand in hand, closely with the ministers and others on the government side, to be able to show them that need and how they can help my community.

It's like that old story from Jerry Maguire: "Help me help you." We need to work together. Hopefully by helping me help you, they will in fact show me the money, as well, for my riding.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Before I move on, I'd just like to get the attention of the House.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Pardon me?

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Yes. I don't think you're in your seat, either, are you?

The members have to realize that there's decorum in here. When they cross the floor in front of moi, they're supposed to acknowledge the Chair. When they walk down, out of their seats, and walk in front of me, they're supposed to acknowledge the Chair. When they leave the premises, coming and going, they're supposed to acknowledge the Chair. I have seen a lot of—how would I put it?—neglect in that area, and the unfortunate part is, some of the senior members are the worst. So I hope we take this under consideration—and I'm not going to blame it on age—but we're going to take this into consideration because we want to keep the Speaker happy, don't we?

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you so much.

Questions and comments? The member from Hamilton Mountain.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure everybody appreciated being told the rules once again here in the House, because it's absolutely critical that we follow policy and procedure when it comes to what happens here in the Legislature.

This is my first opportunity to be able to stand in this House after being re-elected here in the 41st Parliament. I'm absolutely thrilled to have the opportunity to thank

the residents of Hamilton Mountain for putting their trust in me once again and bringing me back here to raise their voice, to raise their concerns each and every time that I stand in this House. I take that responsibility quite seriously, and I thank them for that opportunity. I thank all of the people who worked on my campaign, and my friends and family who supported me to make sure that I came back here and that I was able to do that hard work and speak for the residents of Hamilton Mountain.

I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, when listening to the throne speech, there were so many things that I heard on the doorsteps in Hamilton Mountain that I didn't hear in that throne speech. When I spoke at each and every door during that campaign, there were issues of hydro, and that wasn't spoken about. That is something that I think we need to address and we need to make sure that it's happening here. I'm just happy to have the opportunity.

I really want to congratulate the members from York-Simcoe and Chatham-Kent-Essex on their re-election, and for coming back here. I listened intently to what you had to say. I hope that the members from the Liberal Party in the government are listening, because regardless of whether it's a minority or majority, we're all sent here by the people we represent, and we need to work together to make sure that that happens.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Two of my favourite members in the Conservative caucus spoke on this particular occasion, Julia and Rick, as we would know them personally, but of course, they have names for their ridings. It was nice to hear from them on this particular occasion.

I'm hearing this theme about austerity so much; however, it's overwhelming me when I hear it because here I thought the Conservative Party was the party of austerity. I looked during the campaign—I want you to close your ears now—and the austerity queen was none other than the leader of the New Democratic Party, who said she was going to cut \$600 million a year out of the provincial budget—the members of the opposition were talking about austerity—and was going to appoint a minister of slash and burn, somebody who was going to make all these cuts in government.

So I do appreciate the consistency of my good friends from the Conservative Party who have talked about austerity once again. I happen to believe there's an obsession with austerity that is ruining some countries in Europe at the present time, where the unemployment rate is going through the ceiling.

I'm also sympathetic to the fact that, while the general theme of austerity is with my friends from the opposition, when it comes to their own riding or their own pet projects they're up asking questions about that, and that's natural—but you can't have both.

I also want to say on behalf of your leader, Mr. Hudak, who was the leader of your party until very recently, that I am sympathetic to the treatment that a leader receives in this particular instance. Mr. Hudak has worked very hard on behalf of his party. He's worked hard to make an

alternative to the government and so on. Had he won, people would be fawning around him looking for cabinet seats. He didn't, so they're dumping on him. I want to say thank you, Tim Hudak, for your service to the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'd like to thank the minister for inciting the troops.

Questions and comments?

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I would like to speak to my colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex and his very thoughtful words on the throne speech. From time to time, there were some inspiring words in the throne speech, and we only wish we could believe that they truly believed they were going to make a difference and make everything better in Ontario.

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Balanced budgets that will get rid of the deficit in three years and at the same time increase spending in this budget by \$3 billion, increase taxes by \$3.5 billion—and they think this is how we get rid of deficits in the province of Ontario.

We carry on with a very expensive Green Energy Act which does two very bad things: It creates huge subsidies for electricity that we don't need, because we have lots, and it puts wind towers and solar panels on property across rural Ontario where people have had their democratic rights to say what they want on their property removed. To me, that is unconstitutional, and if we could go to the Supreme Court of Canada, I suggest we could fix that problem. However, we're not at that point now. Good sense would dictate that that piece of legislation should be gone because it's an affront to the people of Ontario, because it takes away their democratic rights, their property rights, and it's taxing people with large subsidies for hydro bills when we don't need that.

We have the scandals that we don't need to talk about, except we will. There's eHealth, there's Presto, there's Ornge air ambulance and there's the famous gas plant scandal which, victoriously, won some seats for Liberals in Oakville and Mississauga—for only \$1.1 billion.

One of the good things that comes out of the budget—here I'd better say something positive; otherwise everybody will get depressed in this House, as they should be—is that the Liberals are going to do something very positive to help the intellectually disabled by spending \$810 million. That's money well spent, and I applaud them for that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments. The member from Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Why, Speaker, I'm so pleased you remembered. Thank you for that introduction.

Interjections.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, some order on that side, please. Try to rein them in—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I appreciate your comments, but the old Speaker doesn't need any coaching. When I think it's out of order, I'll let them know.

Continue.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Why, thank you, Speaker. I will leave you to your methods.

It's a pleasure to be able to speak to the comments from the members from York–Simcoe and Chatham–Kent–Essex. I want to say that the concern about deficit and the need to avoid bankruptcy in this province is probably not a bad concern to have, but to have a policy prescription where the Conservative Party was going to cut corporate taxes by a further 30% says to me that one is not serious about dealing with the finances of the province. It says to me that your party, the Progressive Conservative Party, was interested simply in continuing the tax-cutting ways of the Liberals, who had already cut a comparable amount from corporate taxes, leading to the financial difficulties we have here in Ontario today.

I want to comment as well about the remarks from the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex about renewable energy. I have to say that if he's actually looked at the members, the cost of renewable energy on the average hydro bill is about 5% of the global allocation portion; 70% are subsidies to nuclear and gas. Look at the numbers; know what's going on. With the move from public power to private ownership under the PCs and continued by the Liberals, that is a billion dollars a year on our hydro bills in profit going to those electricity companies. Speaker, the PCs have very little to tell us how to deal with this budget.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from York–Simcoe has two minutes, or the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex. Take your choice.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thanks very much, Speaker.

I'd like to thank the member from Hamilton Mountain for her exposé on thanking everyone in her riding for bringing her here. I am glad to see her here, and I thank her people on her behalf for bringing her here, but my concern is the fact that I wasn't sure where she was going with regard to questions and comments on our particular speech that I shared with my colleague.

I also want to thank the member from St. Catharines for his exposé, as well as my colleague from Carleton–Mississippi Mills, as well as the member from Toronto–Danforth. Obviously, we don't agree on everything. Probably, maybe, we don't even agree on a lot, on how we see things.

My colleague from Carleton–Mississippi Mills pointed out the fact that the Green Energy Act is killing businesses, and we know that. It's driving up energy rates. This government has stated in the past that by, I think, January 1, 2016, energy rates will have gone up 42% throughout Ontario. They say they want to create jobs. Well, that doesn't create jobs, Speaker. That actually kills jobs.

I might add—it sounds like I'm beating a dead horse here with regard to third party advertising. I'd like to suggest, perhaps, that the advertising that was very blatant in this past election—the Liberals really didn't win the election. I'd like to think that the PCs lost it. We lost it, and we admit that.

Interjection.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: You're here, and we're not.

The only question I have is: Where will the money come from?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate. The member from Oshawa.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and my—oh, no, not congratulations on your re-election. Sorry; I should probably pre-read. But I'm pleased to see you.

I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge and appreciate that we are on the traditional lands of the Mississaugas of the New Credit.

Thank you to everyone who decided to run for their local nominations and for election. We must applaud and encourage participation in our democracy. Running for public office is not a small undertaking. Congratulations to my colleagues, both rookie and seasoned. I could not be more honoured to join your ranks and to represent my dynamic riding of Oshawa.

I have lived in a few places, but I have lived the long-est in Oshawa. It is where I bought my little townhouse, on a great street with wonderful neighbours. In fact, I live in a block of townhomes with fences at the ends and none in between, and we share a big community backyard with gardens and kids and sprinklers and barbecues. After a beautiful Canada Day at Lakeview Park, we were able to enjoy the city fireworks from our big backyard. It is also where my beautiful GM Impala was made.

Interjection.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: It's a nice car.

I appreciate my city, and I appreciate my community. It is where I have chosen to put down roots.

Actually, I'm figuratively and literally putting down roots. I love to garden. I grow heirloom and organic vegetables and herbs. I know nothing about flowers, mind you, but if you'd like to talk to me about organic, heirloom veggies, we can have a conversation. I am no stranger to rolling up my sleeves and getting to work.

I have been teaching in the Durham region for 11 years. As an interesting example of what a small world it is, I taught in Pickering for a while and taught the children of the honourable Minister of Children and Youth Services, responsible for women's issues. We worked together to plan grade 8 graduation. Last year, I spent many Friday afternoons protesting the Liberal Bill 115 on the lawn of her constituency office. And now, here we are. Sincerely, I look forward to working with her here at the Legislature. I wonder how this will compare to planning grade 8 graduation? I suspect that this will be slightly less complicated.

I am glad to be able to thank my supportive family and friends. We are the sum of our experiences, and I am a wiser and more grounded person because of the love and involvement of so many. I am very blessed and very grateful.

Thank you to my parents for such a solid foundation and to my brother Steven for always being my balance. As families do, mine has evolved from my childhood, but

it remains a loving and supportive group. My mother is here in spirit and, I expect, will attend to any hecklers.

Interjections.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Just saying. You've been warned.

My grandmothers are both watching at home. Hi, Grandma.

This has already been a phenomenal journey. I was amazed by the work, enthusiasm and investment of my campaign team. There are members of my riding who have been waiting a really, really long time to return Oshawa to the NDP fold. Well, we did it, and we worked tirelessly to make it happen. It was an unbelievably positive and optimistic campaign. We had a purpose, and we had a great time.

Thank you to my core campaign team: Dwaine, Joel, Erin, Angie, David, Colin, Susie, Steve, Jimmy, Andres, Norm, John and Megan.

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Thank you to the members of the riding association who were in the office and on the streets day in and day out, who have been working to build the riding for years.

Thank you to our volunteers who knocked on nearly every door in Oshawa and who made the magic happen every day.

Thank you to our leader for both of her supportive visits and for the work she does every day for all Ontarians.

Thank you to everyone involved, from the CCFers who invested their time and wisdom, to the brand new, card-carrying members who helped make our community orange.

I am grateful for the outpouring of support we received from the community and from across the province. Thank you to those who endorsed our campaign.

We had 250 election-day volunteers, and I am grateful to each and every one of them. We earned almost 47% of the vote.

I recognize that I was a part of a movement in Oshawa, and I appreciate everyone involved. My sincerest thank you is to Oshawa's voters, who came out in record numbers this election. I will work hard to deserve the support that I received.

I spent every day of the campaign knocking on doors in my community. As members of my community opened their doors to me, I was humbled by the windows that they opened into their homes and their lives.

People have real need. We have families in Oshawa and across the province struggling in the margins. They are struggling to afford life in resource-rich Ontario. Life should not be this hard for families. Door after door, I realized that there are voices in Oshawa that are not being heard. Now that I am here at Queen's Park, I realize that Oshawa is a city that is not being heard.

Unemployment is a huge problem across the province. Province-wide, the rate is about 16% or 17%, but in Oshawa it is among the highest in Ontario. In areas hardest hit by manufacturing job losses, like Windsor, Brantford, London and Oshawa, the rate is about 20%,

not to mention that one in four youth is underemployed. We need jobs.

In terms of health care and long-term care, Oshawa is part of the Central East LHIN, which has the longest wait-lists for long-term-care beds, and this needs to change.

More and more people are struggling. Life should not be this hard to pay for. Right now, the reality is that many families can only afford to plan how to pay the next bill, maybe the next few meals. Families deserve stability. Families should not wonder, at the end of the month, "Can we afford to go to the zoo," or "Will we still have hot water? Can we afford to keep driving? Can we afford the gas and insurance? Am I taking my child to a birthday party or to a food bank?" This is not a fair or justifiable reality for families in Ontario.

Oshawa used to be the heartbeat of Ontario. It was booming; it was a thriving community. Oshawa and sister communities like Windsor and Hamilton know all too well the role that government has played in crippling manufacturing with its fascination with globalization and haphazard free trade agreements.

Instead of the constant corporate rhetoric and single-minded focus on tax cuts, what we need are good-paying jobs. Ontario must prioritize paying good wages and creating real jobs so people can live with dignity and stability. We need our leaders to care about equity and fairness of opportunities for everyone.

I went into teaching because I believe that public education is the only system that ensures our students have a strong start. Government uses polite words like "efficiencies" when talking about cuts to education. I know what cuts actually look like, and they're not polite. The reality of bleeding the system dry is that we are robbing our kids of a strong start.

Mr. Speaker, through you, I would love to invite the members to put up their hands if they don't believe in a strong start for our children. Okay.

Public education needs to be strengthened, not stripped and undermined. We have a strong, quality education system, provided by quality educators and support staff. It is an example of a core service that is the responsibility of the government to provide, and provide well.

Ontarians believe that people should have access to quality services, and they pay taxes to ensure that everyone does. No matter where someone lives in Ontario, they deserve access to solid, quality services: quality health care, quality pensions, quality roads, strong emergency services and quality education.

We need to keep quality services in public hands. We need the government to be accountable to the public, to the taxpayers, and committed to quality public services. Our commitment ought to be to Ontarians from every corner of the province not to privatize and profitize just for the sake of it. Tucking our public systems into private pockets means taxpayers cannot see what is going on or hold anyone accountable. We need to safeguard and protect our public institutions. New Liberal code words

for "privatize" seem to be "modernize" and "optimize." I would be reassured to hear good, old-fashioned words like "prioritize," "respect" and "strengthen."

Another solid, old-fashioned idea that is tried, tested and true is that of decent pensions and retirement security. The baby boomers are retiring in droves right now and many have been taken care of, but the next generation is not going to be taken care of. Two thirds of Ontarians do not currently have a workplace pension. Now try to imagine what it will be like when the majority of our aging population does not have the resources to pay their own way, to afford housing, to buy necessities, to live with dignity. Imagine your parents and grandparents. Imagine your friends and neighbours. When will the next generation, saddled with ballooning debt, be able to start to save for retirement? Ever?

As a teacher, I have a defined benefit plan, one of the few that still exists. It's a strong example that pensions can be modelled after because it works. When the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan is experiencing a crisis, it isn't a crisis today; it is a projected crisis based on seven years in the future. That is the kind of responsible planning we need to adhere to in this Legislature. If this government is truly committed to the idea of helping Ontarians plan for and afford their futures, if they truly believe in retirement security and stability, then they should lead with public pensions and not the Harper-style pooled retirement pension plans which commit money to and benefit corporations and banks. Banks and big business are doing just fine, and they are not planning to retire. Even my Conservative colleagues should be able to appreciate that the economy would only be strengthened by the continued financial participation of all people, even in their retirement.

I have been an active teacher and public sector worker, so I obviously believe strongly in public services. I value people and I care about our communities. I also come from a strong social justice background. It is because of my background that I have a healthy respect for democracy. I have witnessed and experienced the power of democracy through the union movement. As a teacher and ETFO member, I have been enthusiastic in defending public education workers against the Liberal Bill 115.

During this unifying time, I also became connected with our labour council and community groups that work to strengthen our neighbourhoods. Bill 115 was about taking negotiated rights out of collective agreements. It was contract stripping at its finest. In going forward, I wonder if the Liberals are going to respect charter rights and free collective bargaining.

Everyone in this room knows that we are in a majority government, but has the government thought about what that will mean? Rather than celebrating the freedom to do whatever it pleases without opposition, consider the weight on this new balance. There is a great responsibility on the leadership of the Liberal Party. The government won't be able to share the blame or the credit for decisions. Quite frankly, the ultimate responsibility will be on this Liberal majority government. These won't be

shared decisions. They will have to own them. I hope they will wield this responsibility conscientiously and fairly. I hope the government will remember to listen.

Regardless of age, life stage or financial status, people in Ontario deserve to have a voice in this room. People in ridings that are not Liberal deserve to be heard as well. I'm not only bringing my voice but I am bringing the voices of my constituents with me. In fact, I asked my 12-, 13- and 14-year-old students about change and making life easier or better, and I'm bringing their voices as well.

Some of their thoughts: "One thing that could change multiple things is wealth. It could stop crime, poverty and mean a cleaner environment. 'Cause if we had wealth, it could help everyone out."

Another student: "It would make my life easier if my dad got paid more and had more money because then I could buy pizza at school and go on school trips."

And another: "I would ask for more gas money so my mom can get a job farther away to make more money. Oh, and I want more streetlights so it isn't so dark."

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Finally, "Change starts with a voice and actually happens with voices and actions. What makes it difficult is convincing people that just because something is the way it is, doesn't mean it's the way it has to be. It doesn't mean it's right."

I missed our grade 8 grad trip to Toronto because it was the day before the election. To make it up to my students, we brought them recently to Queen's Park to see where Ms. French will be working. I was able to see Queen's Park through their eyes, and it was awesome. Everything about this building and institution is impressive and important. We had a wonderful day.

I was pleased to be able to point out on the marble wall Ms. Agnes Macphail and Ms. Rae Luckock, the first two women MPPs in Ontario's Legislature. I was pleased to be able to tell them that I am the first woman to represent Oshawa at Queen's Park and am proud that I am a member of the first party caucus comprised of a female majority.

I am proud to represent a riding of such richness and complexity. Oshawa has significant and diverse challenges, yes, but it has potential and it has a bright and promising future. Oshawa is resilient. No matter what the economy throws at our city, it will be resilient, but it deserves more than it is getting. Oshawa deserves to be actively represented at Queen's Park. Yes, I am here from Oshawa, but more importantly, I am here for Oshawa.

I was asked during the campaign if I would use my voice and have the tough conversations about jobs and wages and poverty and tuition and health care and education and the environment and all that is in Oshawa's best interests. Yes. Yes, I will. I meant it while campaigning, but now I've said it on the official record in the Legislature, so now I have to do the work.

I think everyone in this room is here because they have a commitment to making life better for Ontarians and because they have a vested interest in what happens

in their respective communities. Our ridings are where we live. They are where our kids are getting their start, and most of them will grow up and need jobs and job opportunities. Our ridings are where many Ontarians are retiring and facing difficult realities when it comes to affordable, safe and available housing and care. Regardless of the life stage we are in, life in resource-rich Ontario should not be this hard, and we need to work together to make the changes to make it easier. Everyone deserves to live, work and retire with dignity and with a sense of security.

I've always said that I wanted to be in the room where decisions are made and change happens. In Ontario, this is the room. I may not be on the team making the decisions this time around, but every one of us in this room must be a part of making positive change happen in their communities. We need to take a deep look at why things aren't working. We need to do more than talk about why people don't have enough for their families. Something needs to be done, and we have the power and the ability to do it. But we have to think beyond our four-year election cycle. We have to mean it and make it happen.

I am proud to be a New Democrat and stand with my progressive caucus to defend families, workers and the voices in the margins, as New Democrats always do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

M. Shafiq Qadri: Premièrement, je voudrais féliciter la députée de la circonscription d'Oshawa, récemment élue. Je voudrais congratuler her and her entire family and her team for returning her to this Legislature.

I think all of us appreciated the remarks that she made itemizing not only her gardening expertise, but her family, her team, the energy and the vision she brings to this Legislature on behalf of the people of Oshawa. We detect also the perhaps teacherish tone which will no doubt keep us on the straight and narrow, watching the concordance between promises made and promises kept as the future unrolls.

I might respectfully say to you, Ms. French, just perhaps one slight change, improvement, amelioration to the address that you just made, however heartfelt it was. There was a member in this Legislature who preceded you, the honourable Jerry Ouellette, and I think it is perhaps recommended for a new member who has, yes, earned the right—as you said, almost 50% of the vote—to recognize and perhaps name, if only reluctantly and grudgingly and fleetingly, a man who served his community for 20 years being returned to this Legislature for five elections. While we on this side may not have necessarily agreed with many of his positions, we always recognized that he spoke from the heart and for his people.

So with that, I would salute both you and Jerry Ouellette, for the services that he gave and that you will give to the people of Oshawa.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments? Oh, two stood up at the same time.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Oh, you're on the other side. That's right.

The member from Carleton—Mississippi Mills.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I might have made a politically incorrect statement there, but I didn't.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak to the member from Oshawa's talk. Congratulations on getting elected and joining us here in the House. I'm afraid I can't agree with everything she says, but that might not shock too many people.

Basically, this throne speech is talking to us about a government that has been here, I would say, a little too long, and we're going to have to get used to it for a while longer. They've got some bad habits, like spending and running up debt and doing green energy acts and things like this.

People in Ontario are suffering from high hydro costs. They're suffering from high heating costs. They're suffering from the high costs of just living and paying the bills.

I find the environment that a lot of my constituents are concerned about is that thousand square feet between four walls that they call home, and are they going to be able to continue to live there and pay the bills. They're 60 years old, they have a job and they're having a hard time paying for their homes. That's a terrible thing to say, that we live in a province where that kind of stuff goes on—and I'm quite sure it goes on across the whole province. We have to fix that. That is our job collectively, as the 107 elected representatives here in this House, and we need to create employment.

We've lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs in Ontario. I don't believe those jobs are going to come back. It would be nice to think they would, but we're not going to get 300,000 jobs back. But we have light at the end of the tunnel to create jobs, Mr. Speaker. It's like this: It's natural resources. You look at the provinces in Canada that are prosperous and wealthy, like BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): On a point of order, the minister.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, the topic is to recognize and celebrate a new person in our Legislature, not to debate old politics. Maybe we could at least honour our new members by paying some tribute to them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I thank the minister for his comments, and I would direct the member that this is kind of a nice time where we try to get along. I'll remind the member that there's plenty of time for the attacks, but try to get a little bit back on the member's presentation. Thank you.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: All right. I apologize, Mr. Speaker, and you are right, so I apologize to the member from Oshawa. I was getting a little carried away with some habits. I wish you well in this House and look forward to working with you. I'm sure that with good intentions we'll get some good things done.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a privilege to stand up and comment on the maiden speech of the member from Oshawa. I would like to welcome her officially.

I think that her comments, actually, touch upon some of the principles and values of our party. I think she was humble and sincere in acknowledging the people who helped bring her to this place. I think all of us can acknowledge that none of us get to sit in this House by ourselves, and I think that the people who helped Ms. French get to this place should feel honoured to have been part of that process.

It was an exercise in democracy in Oshawa, and she is part of history: the first female to represent that riding, the first party where 50% of the caucus is women. These are not small things, and they are to be acknowledged and to be recognized.

I think, quite honestly, her history with Bill 115 also needs to be acknowledged, because sometimes we don't know how strongly we feel about something until someone tries to take that away. A lot of us, actually, got angry enough on a number of issues. For me, it was Bill 160, way back in the Harris days. I think that we are going to benefit from her strong voice on the issues of education, on the issues of labour and, quite honestly, her nurturing habits and culture.

I also think that it's really important for us to acknowledge the people who are family. For you to mention your mother, that she's here in spirit and that's she's going to give the hecklers a run for their money—she's going to be a little busy. I just wanted to let you know that.

1640

It is a tradition in this House to be nice and to be respectful of the members who stand up and give their maiden speeches, because it's a special time, to stand up for the first time. It is unfortunate that the member from Kitchener Centre, this morning, failed to recognize that parliamentary tradition in the House, and I want to say thank you to the Minister of the Environment for recognizing it—because this morning the member from Windsor West gave an equally strong speech and was not recognized. So I think that needs to be talked about, as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments.

Mr. Chris Ballard: Like my fellow members before me, I would like to congratulate the member from Oshawa. Like her, I am new to this chamber and am filled with a small amount of trepidation as we undertake new tasks and new duties every day. Congratulations to your family and to your team. I know everyone makes quite a sacrifice to get us into these seats and to support us when we're here. This is a sacrifice that our entire family makes.

I'm always fascinated by the number of teachers I run into who are involved in the political process. I think, from my experience, that teachers, by and large, have a very strong social justice—a sense of social need, prob-

ably developed through years of being in the classroom, or perhaps what took them into the classroom in the first place.

For my part, I have always found that if you're at a party and the conversation is lagging—talk to people about who their teachers are, who their favourite teachers were. It's amazing how we can reach back into history and remember our grade 6 teacher, our high school teachers etc. with some fondness. It's very important.

Like the two members of the third party who spoke, I got involved in politics because of what was happening in education, with Bill 160 especially. As a parent, I was angered by the impact on my children's education, the impact on teachers who were teaching my children, and what a mess had been created that took many, many, many years to be fixed.

I'm so delighted to have heard the Premier, this morning, remind us about graduation rates today, and that has a lot to do with the work that teachers have done to rectify the situation.

I'll just end by saying congratulations and thank you. We look forward to working with you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Oshawa has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Thank you to the members from Etobicoke North, Carleton-Mississippi Mills, Kitchener-Waterloo and Newmarket-Aurora for your supportive comments, but also for your enthusiastic and thoughtful criticism.

I am pleased to acknowledge the contributions of the members who have served before me and who are serving in this House now. Oshawa has appreciated Jerry Ouellette's service for 19 years, absolutely.

All people deserve fair and abundant opportunities in life, and everybody should have access to those services, so I am pleased to be a voice in this caucus, standing up for, as I said, those important public services and for fairness.

I have worked extensively with leaders, grassroots organizers and labour in our neighbourhoods, and I have listened to and learned from all voices. They have inspired me and encouraged my commitment to Oshawa.

I have been, and will continue to be, a strong voice for all sectors in my community. In addition—I hadn't mentioned it in my inaugural speech—I want to assure the people of Oshawa that I will work with the francophone community to bring the French-language designation to my area.

A little more about when my students came to Queen's Park: When they came for the tour, the media interviewed some of them and filmed a question-and-answer session with the students. They asked me a number of tough questions, and they weren't easy. They gave me a run for my money. They wanted to know if I would forget where I came from. They wanted to know if I thought my voice would be big enough to get the message across. They wanted to know if I was going to get named and get kicked out, because they thought that would be awesome.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: We could work on that.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Yes, well, we'll see. It's only week two.

It was interesting to hear that one of my students was actually interviewed by the local TV station and was asked if she would vote for Ms. French in the next election, when she's old enough. She told them that she would support me now if she were old enough. However, she also said that a lot could happen in four years, and that people change.

Laughter.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I know.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Remember that.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Hold on. She will wait to see if I will still be someone she would trust to speak for her and her community. Well, Jamaica, I accept your challenge and I extend it to the rest of my colleagues. Will we have done enough in our communities—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: —and for Ontario—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: —to be worthy of their trust and support? Let's hope so.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. I've given you all kinds of extension.

Further debate? And try to keep within the time limit, please. The member from Ottawa-Orléans.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Merci, monsieur le Président. I am honoured to rise today to represent the great riding of Ottawa-Orléans. Ottawa-Orléans is a community where people are standing by each other, where francophones, anglophones and allophones share a common vision: making their community and their province the best place to live, to educate their children and to raise our families. I have been part of this great community for 16 years. Being their voice here at Queen's Park could not make me more proud.

I want to begin by congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, on your appointment, and by congratulating all members of this House on their recent election.

C'est un grand honneur de faire partie de cette Chambre. Je me joins à tous les parlementaires de cette Chambre pour vous féliciter de votre nomination à titre de Président de la Chambre.

Before I speak about the speech from the throne that I proudly support, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my family. Je n'aurais jamais pu faire tout cela sans l'appui et le soutien inconditionnel de ma famille.

My husband, Alvaro, and I met when we were 18 years old. We met at a local discotheque. We both shared a passion for dancing. After 25 years, we could not be more proud of the life we share together as a family. No matter what ideas or goals I had, he always pushed me to follow them. He deserves more recognition and thanks than I can put into words. His endless support and affection were matched only by his hard work on this campaign.

We are blessed with a daughter. Monica, I am overflowing with gratitude for your love and patience. For

many years, I was part of your life as your hockey team manager. You made me so proud. But more than a manager, I was a proud mom of the best goalie. Every single game, you were a fierce competitor. Maybe some of that rubbed off on me. Merci pour ta compréhension et ton soutien. Je ne pourrais être plus fière de toi que je le suis aujourd'hui lorsque je vois la femme que tu es devenue.

I could not go on without mentioning my parents, Monique and Royal. Votre amour et soutien depuis le début de cette extraordinaire aventure ne peuvent passer sous le silence. Thank you for giving me the necessary tools and the support to become the woman I am today. It is thanks to you that I have never hesitated in chasing my dreams. Je vous remercie du plus profond de mon cœur.

As everyone in this House knows well, campaigns are also not possible without a strong team of dedicated and loyal volunteers. I was lucky to have the best of them—well, as I do say myself. I am filled with gratitude for every hour of every day my volunteers put in. I want to say thank you for being engaged in the political process, and, most of all, thank you for believing in me.

A big thank you to my core team—they know who they are. I know that many of you sacrificed time with friends, boyfriends, and family. I will eternally be grateful.

I stand here today with humility, conscious of the history held in these walls. I am filled with a sense of purpose and commitment to live up to the expectations of those who have placed their trust in me.

1650

One of them was Phil McNeely. I would like to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to the former MPP for Ottawa—Orléans. Phil gave more than a decade of his life to this Legislature and years before that to the city council of Ottawa. I would like to commend him on his dedication to public service. He and his wife, Anna Marie, knocked on doors, made phone calls, and recruited volunteers when they could have been enjoying retirement, during my campaign. I say, thank you, Phil.

Let's remember. Rappelons-nous : il y a 11 ans déjà, les gens de ma merveilleuse circonscription d'Ottawa—Orléans disaient non à un système d'éducation non performant, à des temps d'attente à l'urgence inacceptables et à une infrastructure désuète et en péril. Ils ont dit non en élisant Phil McNeely et en s'assurant ainsi que les changements nécessaires allaient se faire. Merci, Phil, pour tout ce que tu as fait pour nous. Our community will be forever in your debt.

Last, but certainly not least, I want to acknowledge and recognize the people of Ottawa—Orléans for electing me to be their voice. The trust they have put in me is humbling, and I accept it with gratitude, and I will do my best every day to keep it.

Je tiens à remercier du fond du cœur les gens d'Ottawa—Orléans pour la confiance qu'ils m'ont démontrée en me permettant de devenir leur voix à Queen's Park.

J'aimerais donc prendre avantage de l'occasion qui m'est donnée aujourd'hui devant cette Chambre pour

vous parler un peu de moi et de ma communauté que j'ai l'honneur de représenter depuis le 12 juin dernier.

I would like to take this opportunity to tell the House a bit about myself and my community.

As a former businesswoman with a background in social work, I have seen first-hand the needs of my community and the importance of investing in front-line services.

I started my career as a social worker with the children's aid society, and then went on to work for CHEO, the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. I sought out those jobs as a way to help people.

I gained enormous fulfillment from helping young people, but my real passion came when I started working at the Ottawa Hospital, helping seniors transition into long-term care or retirement residences.

While in that job, I saw that there was a gap in services. This was during the Harris years. There was no long-term care in the area, and I had to send seniors away from their families and communities in order to access services.

I went on to work in the retirement sector, and then had the great honour of building and co-owning a retirement residence in Orléans.

Most of my career has been spent in helping the most vulnerable in our society—the young and the aging—and I have seen the impact of our government's good work on the lives of my constituents.

I then decided to run to be a part of that work. I am here to serve, to listen, to lead and to act in the best interests of the people of Ottawa—Orléans.

Je suis ici aujourd'hui devant vous avec humilité, pour dire que je suis prête à servir, à écouter, à diriger et à agir dans les meilleurs intérêts des citoyens et citoyennes d'Ottawa—Orléans.

My life has been filled with challenges and positive opportunities, but being elected to represent a community like Ottawa—Orléans, which I have grown to love for the past 16 years, will be my most important challenge.

Ottawa—Orléans is where I chose to live, work and raise my family. It has seen a lot of change in recent years. Just a few short decades ago, most of my riding was rural. Our community has seen huge growth, and more and more families decide this is where they would like to start their lives.

Orléans also has a vibrant francophone community. The riding has one of the highest populations of francophones in the province. More than 35% of the people speak French as their first language.

Je suis extrêmement fière de mes racines franco-ontariennes, et c'est avec beaucoup d'humilité que je représenterai cette communauté en tant qu'adjointe parlementaire à la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones.

In addition to being a bilingual community, we are lucky to be the home of many different cultural groups. Just recently, the mosque in my riding, Bilal Masjid, was able to raise enough money for an expansion. I have learned so much about generosity from my friends in this community.

A little tidbit that some of you may not know is that during the last election, Ottawa–Orléans had the highest voter turnout in the province. I cannot say how honoured I am to have received such a vote of confidence from my constituents.

We have a bilingual, diverse and engaged community that has so much to offer. Our community is such a good place to live, in many parts thanks to the record of the past Liberal governments.

We have a state-of-the-art community arts centre. We have opened numerous family health teams that have given family doctors to over 30,000 orphan patients. We have funded and opened La Cité collégiale's satellite campus, le Centre des métiers Minto, Alphonse-Desjardins, the first post-secondary education campus in Orléans' history. We've built four new schools and have fully funded the construction of Avalon II. We have doubled the size and capacity of the Montfort hospital—where I can proudly say I was born—after the previous government tried to close it, and, in addition, opened a military wing for members of the armed forces. The Montfort also became the first French teaching hospital in the province.

Our commitment to the environment and source water protection can be seen in the investment in Petrie Island, the Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Committee, and the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority.

Ce sont des réalisations dont je suis fière, mais je suis aussi consciente du travail qui reste à accomplir.

This is a record that I am proud of, but I know more work must be done, and this is exactly what I heard when I went door to door during this campaign. The people in my community expect that politicians will work together to find solutions to our challenges and spend within our means.

I'm also pleased to be able to tell my constituents about Premier Wynne and our government's plan to invest in people and partner with businesses while maintaining an unwavering commitment to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18. The residents of Ottawa–Orléans voted for a plan that believes in the strengths of its people. We know that the people of this province have the talents and skills to build up our economy, and our government will build that talent through education and training.

This government has been a leader in the education sector. Thanks to our policies and investments, young people, from kindergarten to post-secondary, are supported. Things like full-day kindergarten, smaller class sizes, and the 30% Off Tuition grant have made Ontario's education system one of the best in the English-speaking world. Graduation rates have increased to 83%, and more young people are now able to access post-secondary education. We are giving them the supports they need to succeed, and making sure no one falls through the cracks.

My community is growing quickly, and there is a need for both English and French schools. I am comforted to know that this government will continue to fund

education so that every child in my riding has access to education in whichever language they choose.

One of the major issues that came up during the campaign was about transit. It is an issue that I have championed and is extremely important to the growth and prosperity of my community. The people in my community deserve to be able to get to and from work with reliable public transit. I want to thank the Premier, who personally came to Ottawa–Orléans to commit to funding the Ottawa LRT. This government has sent a clear message that we are building better public transit in cities and better roads to connect towns with rural and remote communities.

1700

The Ottawa LRT project will take cars off the road. It will let people spend less time commuting and more time, quality time, with their families.

Bringing the LRT to Orléans will do more than just ease congestion and help transit riders get to and from work faster. It will also foster the economic development of my community. This is an issue that I have long been passionate about, especially through my work with the Orléans Chamber of Commerce.

Et j'aimerais remercier sincèrement la première ministre, Kathleen Wynne, pour m'avoir fait l'honneur de me nommer adjointe parlementaire au ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure.

From this platform, I will work with the government to partner with business and create a dynamic business climate that brings jobs to communities like mine as well as all across the province.

My previous work has given me a unique understanding of the need for a strengthened pension plan. I saw the realities of the financial hardship our seniors face. We have an aging population, and those people who built this society for us deserve to retire and live with dignity. Residents in my community told me at the door that they are worried about their retirement. They are worried about the future for their children and their grandchildren. Our made-in-Ontario pension plan will build retirement security for every person in the province.

One of the things my predecessor imparted to me was the importance of environmental protection and the need for action on climate change. Il a été un des plus grands défenseurs des causes environnementales et des changements climatiques, and I am overjoyed to be part of a caucus that shares his dedication. Merci, Phil, pour l'héritage que tu nous lègues.

This government renewed its commitment to this cause by adding climate change to the Ministry of the Environment.

In my very own community, our government has committed \$65 million to the Ottawa River Action Plan, which will help clean Petrie Island. Petrie Island is a gem in our community, but the people in my riding are not able to fully enjoy it. I heard many times throughout the campaign that families want to be able to swim at Petrie Island without worry. We know that a healthy Petrie

Island cannot happen without a cleaner and more sustainable Ottawa River.

Le Plan d'action de la rivière des Outaouais est certes une des réalisations importantes à court terme de notre gouvernement envers la communauté que je représente.

I am motivated now, more than ever, by the knowledge that this government will stand up for the needs of the people of my riding and those across the province. I recognize that I have only been here for a short time, but I've already been inspired by the commitment, compassion and talent of my colleagues on both sides of the House. I believe we can hold each other to a higher standard, to act with integrity and to work to improve the lives of Ontarians, together.

If we put evidence before ideology and partnership before partisanship, I know there is common ground to be found in job creation and a better climate for business, environmental protection, a strong public health care system and the funding of modern public transit. I am proud to be part of a team with a leader who recognizes these priorities.

The speech from the throne outlined a commitment to the people of this province that will build on our past successes and follow a strong plan to deal with future challenges. For all those reasons and many more, I am proud to stand in this place and support the speech from the throne. I am proud to support a government and a Premier with a plan to build Ontario up.

C'est avec une grande sagesse et une grande fierté que j'appuie les discours du trône et que j'appuie aussi un gouvernement et une première ministre qui offrent un plan positif pour construire un Ontario fort et prospère. Merci.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It's a pleasure to rise to speak about and to the member from Ottawa—Orléans.

I was in the west wing here and I was watching the member on television. It's hard to see yourself on television when you're in here, but I would suggest that she go through the reruns because she has a real presence in this House. You stand up and you speak very well, and you speak very passionately about your riding. It certainly impressed me and, I'm sure, all members in the House who have been listening to your speech.

That's one issue I had when I first started here: trying to feel comfortable when I was standing up, speaking to people who had been here a long time and certainly had represented their ridings. One thing I did notice when I was watching my reruns was—I didn't think I had the lack of hair that I have. It certainly showed up on the television, so I had to come to grips with that.

But I want to congratulate you on your election victory. Certainly your family and friends played an important part in your victory, and I'm sure that you'll do well here. I want to thank you for what seemed to be your demeanour—what you want to accomplish in this House. I think you'll be a real presence here. I know that your colleagues in the Liberal Party will have to listen to you,

because you speak very well, and I'm certain that will happen in your caucus meetings. Congratulations.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I too would like to echo some of the comments that have already been said. The member from Ottawa—Orléans: You definitely are an excellent speaker—in both languages, I may add. Not all of us have that skill set here yet; some of us are trying very hard.

I do want to say, though, that it is always very emotional and powerful, I think, when new members have the opportunity to stand up and thank the people who helped get them here, mainly the family. I'm sure that your husband is blushing someplace about your comments.

One of the things that you said that really struck me is that all of our constituents expect us to come here and work together. You certainly listed a number of issues you care passionately about that I think we can find some common ground and some consensus on—your first-hand experience in long-term care and seniors' issues, for instance. There is obviously a growing issue in this province, with an aging population and the need for a comprehensive dementia strategy which is truly effective and can reach all communities across the province.

Source-water protection: a huge issue, obviously, right? I mean, we can have a strong economy, our financial institutions can be in good shape, but if we don't have clean water, it really calls into question what motivates us.

I think the humility and compassion with which you express yourself are commendable. I think that you're going to be a real asset to the Liberal caucus. I look forward to working with you, and I'd like to welcome you and congratulate you on your successful election to this place.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Burlington.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: C'est avec grand plaisir que je répons chaleureusement au discours de ma collègue, la députée d'Ottawa—Orléans. It's a privilege to rise in this House and respond to the remarks of my colleague, the member from Ottawa—Orléans.

I couldn't agree more with the comments of the member from Kitchener—Waterloo, who addressed the warmth of—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Excuse me. Sorry to interrupt. You're not in your seat. You have to be in your seat to speak. Go to your seat.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I will go to my seat.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Stop the clock. Stop the train. And since you were speaking French, bonne chance.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Thank you, Speaker, and forgive a rookie mistake. And thank you, colleagues. Thank you very much.

I was wanting to support my colleague, and I'm sure everyone in the House recognizes that. But her comments

about her family, her warmth, her compassion, her sense of humour and her commitment—listening to the comments from members on all sides of the House in their rookie speeches, it's so wonderful to be here as a new member and get to know members from all across Ontario, to listen to their stories and their personal lives and the reason they were elected and why they're here.

1710

I think what really stands out for the member, whom I've gotten to know a bit, and certainly more today, was the common thread. Whether it was her work at the Children's Aid Society, her work at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario or with seniors at the Ottawa Hospital and in long-term care, or her proud francophone roots, these all speak to someone who is absolutely embracing of public service, who cares about people. All of those skills, I think, will be resonant in her work.

I welcome my colleague. I look forward to working with her. I thank her for her amazing remarks today. Again, thank you, Speaker, for this opportunity to welcome my colleague.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments? Oh, this is a bad day here. The member for Nepean—Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Merci, monsieur le Président. C'est un grand plaisir à rise to the occasion and welcome my colleague from the city of Ottawa. Bonne chance, Marie-France, et félicitations. I'm very happy that she's here today and very happy that she had the support of her colleagues, but it was also nice to hear so many nice comments from our colleagues on her maiden speech.

I'll never forget my maiden speech. When I stood up, I, like you, had to replace somebody who was very well-known in the community. You replaced Phil McNeely, a long-time city councillor and MPP; myself, I had a very quiet, shy former member in John Baird.

When you take to the floor of the assembly for the first time, it's a daunting task. I'll never forget, the first person to rise—and I talked about it today—was Peter Kormos, to provide me with some sage advice. I'll never forget it. I think the comments from our colleagues today, from Kitchener, Perth—Wellington and Burlington, speak to the genuine appreciation of your speech.

But I want to give you this advice. It's something that Peter Kormos gave to me, and I gave it as well to the member from Kenora—Rainy River when she gave her maiden speech: At some point in this term, that seat will be your seat. It won't be the former member's seat, it will be a seat from which you are going to speak with authority for the people who you represent, and they will appreciate that.

I know you're going to do well and I welcome you, as your seatmate from the city of Ottawa, to this chamber. May we have many spirited debates and many good times in this assembly. I wish you well. Bonne chance.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you—and I take it you are in your seat?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I am. I am, actually.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Ottawa—Orléans has two minutes.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the members for Perth—Wellington, Kitchener—Waterloo, Nepean—Carleton and Burlington for your wonderful comments. Although most of us will have differing ideas on how to get there, I can tell from the comments that we are all passionate about making Ontario the best place to live.

I recognize there are challenges both in my riding and across the province, but the Ontario government has a plan. The people of this province spoke loud and clear on June 12, and said this is the plan they want. This plan commits to build the infrastructure and transit system that my community desperately needs. Our plan will help make the Ottawa LRT a reality.

C'est un plan réfléchi, qui sera profitable et qui doit passer par une infrastructure solide et un environnement sain. Le train léger va devenir une réalité pour notre capitale nationale.

Our plan also will protect the most vulnerable members of our society. It's a plan that invests in developmental services, IVF and in our front-line workers, like our PSWs. In addition, this plan commits to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18 in a way that is fair and responsible by protecting vital public services.

As a businesswoman, I know very well the importance of spending within your means. I look forward to working with members on both sides of the House and learning from your years of experience. Thank you. Merci.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? The honourable member from Leeds—Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to take this opportunity to thank you and to congratulate you on your re-election, and also your elevation to the Chair. I will try my very, very best to adhere to all the rules of the House, because I don't want to fear your wrath, sir. I do not want to fear your wrath.

I also want to tell you, Speaker, that I'm going to be sharing my time with my neighbour to the east, the member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry.

I want to say to you, Speaker, and to all members of the Legislature how proud I am to be back and also proud to be able to speak on behalf of our party on the speech from the throne.

To begin, I want to offer my sincere thanks to the people of Leeds—Grenville for giving me the honour to serve as their MPP again. I've had the privilege of representing my riding—

Applause.

Mr. Steve Clark: Thanks for that very nice applause. It was my third election on June 12. For four years, I'd been elected. I know there are other members, like the member for St. Catharines, the Minister without Portfolio—he has been a fixture here. I appreciate all of his advice that he has given me. I remember working for Senator Runciman when he was the MPP, and he always told me, "If you want the straight goods, go to Jim Bradley."

Although I haven't been in as many elections as you, sir, I know that we all agree that it is a very humbling experience to be elected—whether it's once, twice or multiple times—to this Legislature.

Hon. Michael Coteau: He was the youngest mayor in Ontario.

Mr. Steve Clark: I appreciate it, Speaker. I want to invite you to come to the riding—I'm speaking now to the minister responsible for the Pan Am Games. I want you to know, sir—through the Speaker to you—that I want you to continue to visit my riding, to visit those wonderful in-laws of yours in the town of Gananoque.

You know what? I'll even take you for a beer at the Gananoque Brewing Co. We'll have a beer together. How's that, sir? If you want to bring the limo-boat down to the St. Lawrence, I'm sure I can get some pictures of the limo-boat in the Gananoque Reporter. If you want to bring it down, I'm sure we can look after it for you.

It's an honour to speak on behalf of the 99,000 residents of Leeds–Grenville. I appreciate the trust that they've given me, and I want to tell those who supported me—but, more importantly, those who did not—that I'll feel honoured to be able to represent your views, not just in the Legislative Assembly but also to advocate for you with the provincial government.

It was those families in Leeds–Grenville, many of whom I met during the campaign, who were on my mind when I was in the chamber listening to the speech from the throne. As we know, those speeches from the throne are very lofty addresses. They're very aspirational, to use a word that Premier Wynne uses quite often.

Do you know what? There are some things that I think all members can agree with, because I wholeheartedly agreed when the government said that its top priority should be—I'm going to quote the throne speech now—"to grow the economy and create good jobs in every region of the province."

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): If I could get the attention of the House, I think people aren't paying attention over there. There seem to be at least six little sidebars going on. I can't even hear the member, and he's right beside me. So if you want to have a nice little discussion and a group thing, go outside. Okay? Thank you.

Continue.

Mr. Steve Clark: Yes, well, I'm glad that the Minister of Transportation isn't sitting in my seat, because I'd be worried that you'd misunderstand and think that I was here. I appreciate him. We go to the same barber.

Anyway, back to the quote from the throne speech, because I know now that everybody is listening to me, the clip I wanted to say that I wholeheartedly agree with was when the government said that its top priority was "to grow the economy and create good jobs in every region of the province," because do you know what? That's my top priority too.

But the one way I think we need to deal with things—and, I think, the best way to fix things for families in

Leeds–Grenville—is to be able to listen to what the government puts forward and to be able to provide an effective opposition. I think that that's one of the things that we're going to try to be as an opposition: very fair and reasonable in our address, not just in question period, but also in debate.

However, I have to say that I do have a lack of confidence in some of the things that the government was saying in last week's throne speech.

1720

It's not just me who lacks confidence, however. Increasingly, the private sector is hedging their bets, because well-run businesses want to operate in well-run provinces. Too many times, I'm hearing from the business community that they don't have that confidence in this government in how they're running the show.

So let's look at their record. Two years ago, Ontario's deficit was \$9.2 billion, and then they increased it to \$11.3 billion. This year, the deficit sits at a staggering \$12.5 billion.

No less of an authority than Craig Wright, the chief economist at the Royal Bank of Canada, offered the following warning in the *Globe and Mail*. Here's Mr. Wright's quote: "The bottom line is that with two credit ratings agencies now knocking, the province of Ontario needs to soon establish some credibility on its plan to control spending in the years ahead."

Credibility means giving us a detailed plan, not some vague promise that the books are somehow going to be magically balanced by 2017-18. Ontarians deserve an answer to the three questions that my colleagues have been asking over and over and over again this week during debate. What services are you going to cut? What taxes are you going to raise? Or are you just going to come clean with the people of Ontario and let them know you're going to break your promise and not be able to balance the budget in three years? That's what people want to know. They want to know the answer.

Already, the cost of servicing our debt is the third-largest spending item in Ontario's budget, about \$11.2 billion. That \$11.2 billion could also pay for many front-line services that my colleagues have, again, been speaking about in question period and in debate. I think our caucus speaks with some urgency, because when you look at the issue, just a minor change in the interest rate is going to cause a detrimental effect to our budget and again, put in jeopardy those services that we want to be paid for.

Speaker, in the few minutes that I have left before I'm going to turn it over to the member, I just want to talk about two issues that weren't included in the throne speech that I think are priorities. One of them in my community is the 97-year tradition of agriculture education that I hope will be preserved at Kemptville college.

Next week, on July 16, the renewal task force has a public meeting. They're going to roll out some of the partners that have come forward, both in the public sector and the private sector. I asked a question earlier this week, on our first day, Monday, in question period. I

invited both the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and also the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to Kemptville to see it themselves. I really hope that, after the public meeting, they don't thrust an imposed position on the facilitator, that the facilitator has the chance to come to the public meeting, that the ministers get a chance to tour the facility, and that they really work with the community, work with the existing partners—no matter whether they're in the public sector, or maybe there are some private sector folks who want to provide a different perspective on how we can keep that 97-year tradition at Kemptville college.

The other issue I want to bring forward is the Thousand Islands casino. It's an urgent issue in my riding. I spent a lot of time and we spent a lot of time at all-candidates meetings as well, and surprisingly, all three parties were against the OLG modernization plan that was tabled by this government. Even the Liberal candidate spoke consistently against the plan. We've had a great opportunity in Gananoque. We've had two tremendously willing hosts with the town of Gananoque and the township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands. We've got a wonderful site that's available to expand.

The one thing that's standing in the way is this OLG modernization plan. Again, my colleague from Nepean–Carleton tabled the motion at public accounts that the Auditor General investigate it, which showed some of the issues. The thing that I couldn't believe when I read the OLG report is that, on page 22 of the report, it revealed that the Liberal cabinet approved, in February 2012, their plans to—and this was the quote from the AG's report—“replace the Thousand Islands casino ... with a casino in downtown Kingston” by the winter of 2015. It was a crazy proposal. I cannot understand why you would take one of the most successful casinos without a racetrack in the province of Ontario and move it a few kilometres down the road. It doesn't make any sense.

Even more important is the fact that just a few kilometres across the bridge in New York state, a developer has announced a \$100-million racino. So here we've got a chance. We need to expand that successful site in Gananoque. We need to go head to head against that racino plan in northern New York state, and instead we're dithering and delaying. We're still talking about a referendum in the city of Kingston, a community that solidly rejected—solidly rejected—that casino back in the 1990s.

Again, those are two issues that I think this government needs to deal with. I appreciate the opportunity to give a few comments, and I'll now throw it over to my colleague from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Thank you, Speaker. I too would like to congratulate you on your re-election, and your ascent to the deputy speaker's position again, and to the new members of the Legislature who have been elected just a few weeks ago, along with the members who were

re-elected. I think it says something for your community. We're looking forward to working with them.

I know the province of Ontario is facing some extreme challenges, and it's our role to make some of the tough decisions to ensure our future prosperity. I would like to thank my family, my volunteers and my supporters who helped me during this campaign. One thing for sure: We could not do it without you.

To the residents of my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, I want to thank them for re-electing me as their MPP. I'm very proud to serve them for the next four years, and I'll look at doing what it takes to make our riding part of the best province in the best country in the world.

They entrusted me with their concerns at Queen's Park, and, Speaker, there's no shortage of concerns with this Liberal government. Throughout the campaign, I heard constituents say that they were worried about a number of issues. First, they perceive the government to have wasted billions of their taxpayers' dollars on failed projects such as eHealth and Ornge, or on cancelling the gas plants to save a few Liberal Party seats—over \$1 billion and no oversight received from this government.

Secondly, they felt that this government had not been straight with them on the cost of the cancellations. In the case of Oakville, swearing numerous times to a cost of \$40 million right up to the day before the Auditor General released his report showing it to be \$800 million—over 20 times the cost. So are they expecting us to believe that they were unaware of this cost, and if so, how can we trust them with our finances?

Then came the deleted emails and the erasure of 20 hard drives in the Premier's office by a friend of a staff member with no security clearance, and nobody identifies or notices that there's a problem with an unauthorized person accessing dozens of government computers, and when he's finished, programs not working, files deleted, requiring tech support to get them working again. How can this happen in this day and age? Is this the type of Third World behaviour that we can expect from the government of Ontario?

And now this technical expert, who was paid well by this government, well over \$100,000, has moved to BC with his friend, who is now employed by the BC Liberal Party, and is outside the jurisdiction of a Speaker's warrant—how convenient.

All from a government and a Premier who claim that they want to do the right thing and increase transparency. During the recent campaign, the Premier refused to commit to a judicial inquiry, saying that she would allow the committee to fully investigate the situation. Well, Premier, the people of Ontario are watching. Your actions will speak loudly as you set up the committees.

Thirdly, people were worried about their jobs and how doing business in Ontario is doing becoming more and more uncompetitive. It could have been their own jobs in jeopardy, due to their employer being on the brink of closing, or concerns about their children's ability to enter a trade or find a job in their field after graduating. Many

of these concerns are due exclusively to the government's misguided policies in many areas, ranging from energy to apprenticeships. We have electricity rates that have increased over 300% in the 10 years since they took over government, and, by their numbers, will increase another 42% over the next five years. Speaker, Ontario's low cost of energy, once one of our major advantages, is now squandered with ill-fated decisions and programs such as the Green Energy Act. And to make matters worse, our neighbours' already low power costs are trending lower as they make strategic decisions allowing them to take advantage of low-cost shale gas.

Rather than listen to Ontarians, the government prefers to cover their ears and pretend that there's nothing wrong. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth.

1730

This government complains that Ontarians are not saving enough for their retirement. Rather than evaluate why our residents' disposable income has declined, they jump to the conclusion that they are simply spending all they earn and should be forced, for their own good, to give the Liberals more of their hard-earned money so they can steward it for the next couple of decades.

This is, first and foremost, a patronizing approach unworthy of this country's most populous province and, until recently, its economic engine. Ontarians have built prosperity over decades through their own efforts and investment. It was through taking charge of our capital and through taking risks by starting businesses and bringing ideas to fruition that we brought solid growth to this province. This government took its spending addiction and figured everyone had it as well.

The residents of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry beg to differ. Many of them can't afford to save more for their retirement because this government has barred them from access to jobs, trades and training.

Many young people in my area wish to become apprentices and serve their community. Instead, the government perseveres in its job-killing apprenticeship limitation policies pushed by the College of Trades.

My constituency office receives numerous complaints every day from lower-income residents, including seniors, who are facing the choice between heating their home or placing food on the table.

Every retirement plan is different since every worker is different. We all have different ambitions for our later years, and we should be allowed to budget accordingly. This government's proposed pension plan is nothing but a tax grab that ignores our right to plan our financial lives independently.

Employees without employer pension plans are trusted to make their own savings arrangements, such as RRSPs. This government insults every Ontarian's intelligence by assuming we can't be trusted with our own money and need this Liberal government to manage our lives for us.

Ontarians would save more if this government didn't take their jobs and savings to pay for their failed policies.

The members on the government side think they know best. Ontarians, on the other hand, have seen first-hand

how the Liberals are best at wasting public money. It takes a particular kind of incompetence to achieve, over a decade, what this government has done.

In spite of doubling tax revenues, they still managed to double the province's debt—and yet still drowning in larger and larger problems. We would consider them mad or at least incompetent if we had a friend who increased his income by that much and still rang up that kind of debt.

This throne speech outlines our progress to a deeper dependency on our lenders' goodwill. Several credit rating agencies have signalled their intention to downgrade Ontario's debt if they do not see urgent action to tackle the rising cost of government.

To the average Ontarian, the province's credit rating may rank lower in priority than many of their other issues. However, it is a major building block of our economy. When lenders don't believe that we will pay our bills, they demand higher interest rates or stop lending to us altogether. When our rating is downgraded, our lenders' list shrinks, and that costs us more—about \$3 billion for every 1%.

This government is forgetting its basic duties. We do not elect governments to run our lives. We elect governments to administer good public policy and to invest our taxpayers' money strategically to secure our future, making life better for our children and grandchildren. Their record on both counts is nothing short of a disaster—doubling our debt without any appreciable results to show for it. Ontarians deserve the best services in the country, for they've definitely paid for them. Instead, this Liberal government has driven the cost of government to a point where we're seeing cuts in the services that we deserve and rely on, such as health care and coverage for seniors and patients with chronic conditions such as diabetes.

Health care in my own riding has been affected. Funding pressures have forced the closure of 14 beds at the Winchester District Memorial Hospital—over 22% of its beds—and the closure of a brand new, modern ICU. It's funny how just a few years ago there was a big ribbon-cutting ceremony when it opened, but only a quiet press release when it closed. We need to give the hospital credit for striving to save and maintain as many patient services as possible. However, 14 less beds means less patients can stay in the hospital after surgery and less vulnerable seniors can be followed up with.

Speaker, it's time for this government to think less about its own skin and to make tough strategic decisions necessary to ensure our children and grandchildren have a better place to live than the one we inherited. Lord knows they will be paying for it for a long time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Before we get into the responses, I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Qaadri assumes ballot item number 1, Mr. Milczyn assumes ballot item number 7, Mr. Delaney assumes ballot item number 2,

Mr. Crack assumes ballot item number 55, Ms. McMahon assumes ballot item number 3, and Mr. Baker assumes ballot item number 74.

The member from Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Speaker. It was with interest that I listened to my colleagues from Leeds–Grenville and Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. It's rather interesting to see that some of their concerns with the throne speech actually resonate quite loudly in my riding of Nickel Belt.

He talked about Kemptville et le collège d'Alfred. Le collège d'Alfred se retrouve dans la même situation que le collège dans son comté, où c'était le premier collège francophone qui, pour des décennies, a permis aux Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes d'avoir une bonne éducation en français dans le secteur de l'agriculture. Tout ça est à risque en ce moment. So I certainly support the efforts from the member to make sure the collège d'Alfred and the Kemptville campus continue to be there.

Another part that really resonates with Nickel Belt is horse racing. For over 50 years, there's been horse racing in Nickel Belt at Sudbury Downs. It was a successful business that supported our farmers, our agriculture, that supported about 100 families. There are no races at Sudbury Downs this year. The track sits there, empty. The barns are empty. The stables are empty. The farmers couldn't help but grow hay, because it's not really something you can prevent, so the hay's still growing. They will go through the expense of harvesting it with no hope in sight of finding a buyer.

This is devastating. You have to realize that in Nickel Belt, we're not about to grow peaches and cherries. Hay is what we grow. But when there are no horses to eat that hay, then the dramatic impact it has on our economy is devastating.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I just want to address some of the comments, because I live with an operating room nurse who has worked in three provinces. He listens and often watches. He says, "Can't you explain to some of your colleagues what is changing in health care and why it's better?"

In my constituency, St. Michael's Hospital has seen a significant reduction in the number of beds. Why? Is that a cutback? No. What they're doing is this: If you talk to Bob Howard—my partner, Rick, works in the operating room. They do keyhole surgery and they do brain tumours, which is what he does, and they send them home. He said that three years ago, they would have been there for four days. When he used to work in Manitoba, it was three weeks. Spleen surgery used to be a three- to four-week surgery; it's now 24 to 48 hours.

Our health care system has done remarkably well in that it has completely modernized that. What used to be, 10 years ago, five years ago or 15 years ago, two-, three-, four-week or month-long stays are now hours and days. That should be celebrated. Every single hospital, from

Women's College to Sick Kids to rehab—all nine hospitals in downtown Toronto are being completely rebuilt. It is a multi-billion-dollar rebuilding. And it's happening in Sudbury, where my family lives, with a brand new beautiful hospital. My aunt who lives in Sudbury, who is one of your constituents, used to be the administrator. She says it's the same thing. People are confusing that.

So where are the health investments going? I have a new birthing centre, four new family health teams, Anishnawbe Health—aboriginal people in my community are finally seeing a full-fledged community health centre—Sherbourne Health. I come from the community health centre, and I know the member from Nickel Belt does. We have been fighting for 50 years to get community health treated like hospitals, and it's happening.

Let's actually have an honest conversation and realize that the health care budget is expanding, but it's shifting to where it should be: better care and shorter stays.

1740

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from—I'm having another moment here.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Nepean–Carleton, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): That's right—Peterborough, no?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Speaker, it's always good to see you in the Chair, and we'll forgive some of the issues that you're having today, because I think it's your first day back.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It has been a very confusing day, with seating arrangements and everything.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It is, I can tell, but it's okay; we forgive.

I'd like to say thank you to my colleague from Leeds–Grenville, as well as my colleague from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. Both of their ridings are adjacent to mine, the very vast riding of Nepean–Carleton, the largest in the city of Ottawa—geographically as well as by population. It's a real pleasure to listen to their perspectives.

I appreciated the concerns my colleague brought to the floor about the Leeds–Grenville/Gananoque casino. I think it's important for members opposite to understand how important that facility is to his community for job creation, stability and, actually, for tourism, because Gananoque is one of the most beautiful places you're going to see in Ontario. It is, of course, right on the lovely Thousand Islands.

My colleague from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and I share a border near Winchester, where there is a very important hospital that services both of our communities. Most people look at me and say, "Okay, she's in the city, so all the hospitals that service her communities are in the city of Ottawa and in Nepean."

Well, quite frankly, my colleague represents Kemptville. His hospital is in Kemptville—as well as Kemptville College, a very important issue—but the Winchester hospital that we share is critical for the care of his

constituents and mine. I think he brought a valid issue to the floor of this assembly; I appreciate that he has been outspoken on behalf of them, and that he wants to bring those views to the assembly.

I'll conclude by saying this: I agree with both of my colleagues, who say that this government has to get their debt and deficit under control, and I'll tell you why: Every single dollar that we spend on servicing the debt and the deficit—and that is going to go up—is a dollar less from our education system, but also from our health care system. So, ladies and gentlemen in this assembly, I think it's very important that we have that important conversation, and that we have it very shortly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's my pleasure to speak to the comments from the members from Leeds–Grenville and Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

First, to the member from Leeds–Grenville: I agree; Gananoque is an extraordinary place, and I think he's very lucky to represent that community.

I have to say that he raised the whole question of whether this government is going to engage in substantial cuts in services or substantial increases in taxes to deal with its financial problems.

I would not be surprised if there were substantial cuts in services, but I also want to point out to him that this government has already made it clear, prior to the introduction of the budget earlier this year, and certainly in the course of the speech from the throne, that it has great interest in selling off public assets to private corporations. That, in fact, will have substantial impact on the economy of this province. We have seen the impact of privatization of hydro—electricity generation—drive up the cost of electricity for people across Ontario.

What this government is contemplating is sales of public assets—they call it “recycling of assets”—which will make its books look better when it goes to make its next budget presentation, but, frankly, those sales of public assets will mean a reduction in people's standard of living. They will pay more for the services. If it's for hydro or if it's for the purchase of beer, wine or liquor at the LCBO, money will flow into private pockets and out of the pockets and purses of people across Ontario. That's what is being contemplated by this government. They may well have other things on the go, but that's a piece that cannot be ignored.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry has two minutes.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I thank the member from Nickel Belt, the Minister of the Environment, my colleague the member from Nepean–Carleton, and the member from Toronto–Danforth.

It's interesting to talk about Kemptville College and the closure. It is a huge issue in my riding, too. It doesn't sit in my riding, but certainly it is probably the most-utilized post-secondary institution in SD&G. We're a very agricultural community, and farmers over the

years—generations, actually; the last hundred years—have gone there. It's crucial that we keep it open, especially with the trade agreements that are putting more pressure on agriculture.

We talk about our hospitals. It's interesting that the Winchester hospital—I guess you have to look at it two ways. We just finished building a new ICU unit in the hospital. I took a tour just a few weeks ago, and one of the doctors pointed out that the doors are locked. If you make the investment, if you're spending millions of dollars, and a new, modern part of the hospital is locked and they're forced up into the old part of the hospital upstairs—either you need it or you don't. If you don't need it, then don't spend the millions of dollars—just another added waste of money, then. I don't believe it's waste; I think it should be opened. But that's what they're forced into.

We have to look at securing our future, spending our money wisely. We look at this budget. We've heard now that if it is passed, there's a downgrade in the credit rating coming through—likely another \$3 billion in costs not in the budget. That means that services have to be cut. I talked to doctors in my area. They tell you, “Yes, some of the numbers look good. The numbers are good between getting a doctor's appointment and getting services.” But getting the doctor's appointment is tough, because there's no funding for the doctors in the area. Optometrists—you have to wait months and months; six or seven months just to get that appointment. Sure, once you get it you can get the operation done. But it's all part of the numbers that skew the results.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? Member from Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Why, thank you, Speaker. It's an honour to be able to address you and to address the matter of the speech from the throne.

First of all, of course, I want to thank my constituents in Toronto–Danforth for re-electing me, sending me back to represent them. I want to thank them. I want to thank my campaign workers, my volunteers, my donors, all those who went through an extraordinarily long six weeks—an extraordinarily long six weeks.

I want to thank as well David C. Onley, our Lieutenant Governor, who's leaving his post. He took his role seriously. He discharged his duties with great dignity. I think that we should all be grateful to him for taking on the post and acting the way he did. Last week he delivered the speech from the throne on behalf of the new Liberal government.

I won't be spending time on every element in that speech—I don't have enough time allocated to me—but there are three areas I want to touch on. One is the growing unfairness, the growing income inequality, in Ontario. I want to talk about the dismantling and piecemeal sale of our public assets. And I want to talk about the failure to act on climate change, either to slow it down or to prepare for its impact.

I'll start with the growing unfairness. That, Speaker, is not addressed in the speech from the throne, and I don't

believe it's addressed in the budget that will be presented to us next week either. As you are well aware, Speaker, Canada is becoming is a more and more unfair country in terms of income and in terms of wealth. And Ontario is one of the leaders, under the Liberals, in reinforcing that unfairness through tax cuts for corporations and unfair policies for people at the bottom of the income scale. In 2011, Stats Canada reported Ontario as the second most unfair province in terms of income inequality in Canada, being beat out only by British Columbia. After eight years of Liberal rule, the gap between the lowest earners and the highest was extraordinarily sharp.

Recently, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives put out a report called *Outrageous Fortune*. They give the numbers for income distribution in Canada. They talk about that inequality. And since Ontario is one of the most unfair, unequal provinces in the federation, these numbers certainly apply to us. I have to say, I was thinking about the comments from the member from Oshawa earlier about: Why is it so hard for people who work for a living? Why is it that those that go out every day to make the goods and deliver the services that allow us to enjoy this society—why is it that they're so hard-pressed? She asked that question and grounded it in the concrete reality of Oshawa. I've seen it in my riding; everyone in this chamber has seen it.

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives reports that 20% of Canadians have almost half the income, which means that 80% of Canadians have to live on the other half.

Interjection.

1750

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yes, I'll tell you. It's pretty straightforward mathematics. That is a very, very tough situation for 80% of Canadians. Even more unfair, that top 20% has 70% of the assets; the bottom 80% has 30% of the assets.

If we wonder why in Stormont-Dundas-South Glen-garry people feel hard-pressed when programs come forward, if we talk about seniors living in Hamilton Mountain trying to make ends meet, if we talk about people in just about any riding in this province, people are increasingly hard-pressed as this society becomes more unfair and more unequal. That, Speaker, is not addressed in this speech from the throne and it is not, assuming that the same budget is introduced, going to be addressed in the budget next week.

Speaker, I would say that one can look at the history of tax cuts delivered by this Liberal government and one can see a very clear continuation of a policy of unfairness and growing inequality. I'll give you an example of a hit that was imposed on those in that bottom 20%, people who have some income, who have negative net worth, because as a group they're in debt. Many of those people depend on tax credits and transfers from federal and provincial governments to make their budgets work. A few years ago, this Liberal government introduced a change around the Trillium benefit so that instead of people getting a lump sum payment after their taxes were

paid, in fact, it's distributed over a year, on a monthly basis.

My colleague Michael Prue, when he was critic for finance, raised this matter because—for him and for me and for all of us—we dealt with seniors and people on low and fixed incomes who desperately needed that chunk of cash to clear bills off the table, to deal with extraordinary expenses; and without their permission, without their consent, without them being asked or informed, suddenly they found out that they couldn't pay off those bills, that it would be spread over a year. Michael Prue raised that issue. He said to Dwight Duncan at the time, "You've got to restore that single payment."

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Oh, he did. Oh, he did, my friends. He did.

I'm going to read you an email that I was sent, just yesterday, actually.

"Hello Peter,

"My name is Pat.

"I am sending this email today because I am outraged over the Trillium" benefit. "I was angry when it was first implemented, because it impacted my overall tax return....

"Last year, because of the amount I am due back on my Trillium I was ineligible to have it granted to me in a lump sum"—because if it's small enough, they'll give you the lump sum, but not if it's large—"and thus had no choice but to receive it on a month-to-month basis. This year while I was filling out my tax return, I was ecstatic to see that I now had the option to get it all in a lump sum, because it would help me greatly in getting ahead in paying off some bills and debt. Nowhere did I read on my tax return that I would have to wait until June of 2015 in order to receive this payment and I was shocked and upset when I received a notice in the mail telling me this."

Yes, you understand correctly. The lowest-income Ontarians who qualify for this tax credit are effectively being forced to loan their tax refund to the province of Ontario for up to a year instead of getting the payment that they, as the lowest-income Ontarians, should be getting speedily and in one lump sum, should they request it.

Miss Monique Taylor: As our friend Rosie would have said, "God bless."

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Our friend Rosie would have said "God bless," but not in this case, because God doesn't bless taking on seniors and people who are in desperate circumstances and imposing on them a forced loan to the government of Ontario—a forced loan to the government of Ontario.

Pat wrote further:

"I am sending this email to you ... because it feels like you are the only voice that I have that can reach these people, to tell them just how unfair it is that they are giving us such a lousy choice with heavy stacks in favour of only one of the options while there are so many deterring factors for the other....

"Thank you for taking the time to read this email."

This treatment of the people with the lowest incomes in this province is symptomatic is the way that the Liberals have created and enforced income unfairness and income inequality in this province and this needs to be corrected.

Mr. Mike Colle: Oh, give me a break. Where were you on the minimum wage?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: May I say, Speaker, there are some people in this House who have very poor memories, and I can hear them nattering in the background. They natter on, they natter on.

The second issue I want to address is the sale of public assets. In April I attended a media conference that was hosted by Mr. Sousa, Minister of Finance. He talked about "recycling of assets." I took that as code for privatization, and interestingly, so did all the reporters who were there reporting that day. One reporter said to Finance Minister Sousa, "Why are you talking about this when we've seen the impacts of the sale of the 407? We know what happened to Ontarians there." His response was telling and is consistent with everything we've heard since. He didn't think that the sale itself was a problem; he thought the way it was sold was a problem. He felt they had approached it badly. They hadn't gotten a good deal for Ontarians. Speaker, when you sell off public assets, critical public infrastructure, to public companies that can frankly take whatever the traffic will bear—pardon the pun—then you undermine the standard of living and you undermine the economy of the people of Ontario. And this government is on track to do exactly that again.

What's on the table? Ontario Power Generation, Hydro One, LCBO. In 2010, Dwight Duncan and Dalton McGuinty brought that forward. They threw in OLG at the time. Speaker, there was tremendous public outcry and understanding of the economic consequences of that action, and that government at that time backed off. But now we've got a whole new flurry of euphemisms, of code words, of panels whose job it is to slide through the full or partial privatization of three key public assets.

Speaker, this speech from the throne and the policies that it envisions will mean further erosion of the stability of Ontario's economy and further reduction in our standard of living. I had a chance earlier in my comments to talk about electricity. Let's be very clear: The policies that the Conservatives put in place and that the Liberals continued for privatization of power generation added \$1 billion in profit every year that people have to pay on their hydro bills—\$1 billion a year they didn't have to pay in the 1990s before the privatization.

I see from your subtle sign, Speaker, that we may be coming to the end of time here, and I look forward to a more direct signal on your part indicating an end. Until that point—aha. I take that as a clear signal. Thank you for your time and attention, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I thank the member from Toronto–Danforth, and he will continue again where he left off.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Since it's six o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1758.

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of Ontario

First Session, 41st Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 41^e législature

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Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 10 July 2014

Jeudi 10 juillet 2014



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 10 July 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 10 juillet 2014

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.
Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on July 9, 2014, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Ms. Soo Wong: It is truly a privilege to rise in this House on behalf of the riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, and to speak on the throne speech and the priorities of this government. I'd like to begin my remarks this morning by thanking the residents of Scarborough–Agincourt for their vote of confidence and trust to re-elect me as their member of provincial Parliament.

I also want to acknowledge His Honour the Honourable David C. Onley for delivering his last throne speech in this Legislature, and for his contribution to this great province.

Ontario's 41st Parliament reflects a diverse, inclusive, one Ontario, where there were more women elected to this chamber, including the election of our first female Premier, in this great province.

On June 12, Ontarians made their voices heard and chose an approach that is balanced but also compassionate. As the throne speech phrases it, they chose a government that will build from the "activist centre." Leading from the activist centre is what the people of Ontario have asked us to do. The throne speech puts evidence before ideology and chooses co-operation and partnership over partisanship. This direction fully chooses to acknowledge the challenges facing this province and commits to working with people from all parts of this province, from all backgrounds, and to find solutions in moving Ontario forward. Together we will build more opportunities and provide security for all Ontarians.

To start, we must acknowledge that our economy is still recovering from the economic downturns of the 1990s and late 2000s, and that our government continues to make investments to strengthen our economic positions. We have great potential that is yet to be realized. We have the right resources and the right people to attract business and create jobs.

I'm very pleased to see that our government's top priority is to grow the economy and create good jobs in every region of this province; hence the provincial government will create partnerships through the Jobs and Prosperity Fund. This new fund will help to create more good jobs in traditional and emerging industries, and bring much-needed investment to regions still recovering from the impact of the global recession. Sectors like advanced manufacturing, automotive, agri-food, information and communications technology, and media and culture will benefit from this fund.

I'm also very pleased at some of the first two government bills tabled in this Legislature early this week by the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure: Bill 6, An Act to enact the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2014, and Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014. These two pieces of legislation will continue to attract job creators and grow our economy.

Furthermore, the proposed Jobs and Prosperity Fund will enable communities from across Ontario to win the global competition for jobs and attract foreign direct investment and create jobs.

During the election, I heard from many families in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt about youth unemployment. In the throne speech, the provincial government stated that it will provide opportunities for our youth by extending the youth jobs strategy to help more young people to find promising careers and by supporting the largest apprenticeship system in Ontario's history. I know many Ontario youth are getting the education, but they are struggling to find jobs that match their education training. Through Ontario's Youth Jobs Strategy, the Ontario government is committed to find positions for 30,000 youths across Ontario. I know this plan is working. To date, over 150 youths in Scarborough–Agincourt have found employment through the Ontario Youth Employment Fund.

We know that once you have a job, you need to find a way to get to the job, and that's why our government is committed to investing \$29 billion over the next 10 years for transit and public infrastructure. We know that Ontarians want to see a reduction in gridlock, and I know that in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, they want to spend less time in traffic jams and more time with their families and in their own communities. For too long, our public transit system has been neglected. Meanwhile, decades of growth and development have left our public transit system outdated, and populations like my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt have been underserved. That is

why our government has committed \$15 billion towards transit projects in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. We need to get Ontarians moving, and it is the right thing to do for our economy but also for the people of our province.

We also know that we need our federal and municipal partners to work with us. That is why, in the throne speech, we have committed our government to work with other levels of government to find the best solutions and the right investments in terms of public transit.

Part of what is setting Ontario apart from other jurisdictions in North America is a commitment to strong, publicly funded education. Furthermore, it is a comprehensive education system that supports our children and youth from birth to job force.

Our provincial government knows that investment in early childhood education gives our children the early start they need to succeed. We believe in and respect our front-line workers, like early childhood educators. The provincial government is demonstrating our appreciation for the important role they play in our education system by increasing the wages of these hard-working, dedicated front-line workers who have an important task in looking after Ontario's youngest citizens.

Because of the leadership and the vision of this side of the House, full-day kindergarten will be available across Ontario this fall, including in all 28 public elementary schools in Scarborough–Agincourt.

Our schools continue to rank as some of the best in the English-speaking world, and our children continue to prove themselves to be leaders and innovators. I'm pleased that the throne speech includes the implementation of Achieving Excellence, a plan to take public education in Ontario from great to excellent by continuing to improve learning. It enables young people to prepare to lead in the global economy.

As young people transition from high school into college or university, our government is working to help students make the most of the opportunities available to them. We will continue to provide 30% off tuition grants that have already been received by over 400,000 students province-wide since 2012. I know many young people in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, like Christian, Winnie, Judy, Akehil and the Steve Gracey girls—I know you're watching this morning—who recently graduated from local high schools will benefit from this tuition grant.

The Ontario government is committed to investing in and supporting our young people by building new campuses in Ontario and increasing access to French-language programs for francophone Ontarians. Furthermore, our government plans to launch Experience Ontario, a plan to help recent high school graduates experience real work opportunities in order to better help them choose a path in life that best suits their talents and their convictions.

In order to build Ontario for tomorrow, the throne speech made a key commitment to public education, and it's also a priority for our government.

We know Ontarians are leaders when it comes to climate change. Our government's elimination of coal power generation is the most significant climate change initiative in North America.

0910

Yesterday Minister Murray announced the reintroduction of the Ending Coal for Cleaner Air Act to highlight our new Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change that will build on the historic phasing out of the coal power plants. I'm proud of the work that this government has done to improve environmental sustainability, but I know more needs to be done on this issue.

Unpredictable and extreme weather can have a significant impact on our economy and livelihood. This is something that's well understood in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt. The ice storm and severe winter weather that hit our community last winter left many residents in my riding without power and shut down roads and businesses.

Our government responded quickly and provided much-needed support to displaced families and individuals. I was proud to join many of the volunteers who helped out in the warming centres and knocked on doors to ensure individuals and families were safe in their homes.

We need to do everything we can in this Legislature to prevent these storms from having such dramatic effects on our communities. That is why our government is committed to continue to work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change.

We know that climate change is not something our province can work at alone and resolve but that's why we continue to work with our federal partners to address climate change at a more global scale.

On June 12, we heard loud and clear that Ontarians want to see an open and transparent government. The throne speech clearly stated the government will reintroduce the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act. On July 8, Minister Matthews reintroduced this bill that strengthens accountability, oversight and transparency across government and the broader public sector.

If passed, it will give more powers to the Integrity Commissioner to investigate and punish wrongdoing and strengthen the laws on the retention of government documents. The Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act will give the provincial government the power to control compensation of senior executives in the broader public sector, provide greater oversight and accountability of arm's-length government agencies, thus ensuring Ontarians' tax dollars are spent wisely.

In my riding, the residents want and expect an open and transparent government from this province. In the throne speech the government acknowledged that trust is hard to earn but easily lost. Hence, every day our government is committed to working hard to earn the trust of Ontarians.

On June 12, we also heard that Ontarians want the government to attract jobs and make the right strategic

investments. At the same time, we cannot ignore the fiscal realities that we are living in. Already the Ontario government spends less per capita on programs than any province in Canada. Our throne speech reaffirms our commitment to not add any fiscal pressure on Ontario families. We will not raise the HST, the gas tax or the personal income tax of middle-class Ontarians. Instead, we're asking the top earners to pay a little bit more. This is essential as we work to eliminate the deficit and reduce the debt burden in a responsible manner.

Ontarians also expect that this government is careful with how they spend their dollars. That is why we created the new position of the President of the Treasury Board, a position that will help our government to stay on track to reach our fiscal targets. In this new role, the president will improve accountability and transparency while overseeing the crown agencies, boards and commissions. This position will also assist with labour relations and make sure that both employees and Ontarians are receiving the best possible deal.

The throne speech also clearly lays out our government's commitment to introduce a new poverty reduction strategy. It will build on the gains made with Breaking the Cycle, Ontario's first poverty reduction strategy that got 47,000 children out of poverty, and prevent more from falling into it. As a government, we have already taken measures to address childhood poverty by increasing the Ontario Child Benefit. Through legislation, our government aims to index future annual increases to inflation so that low-income families do not fall further behind.

To ensure fairness to workers and families, legislation will be introduced to increase Ontario's minimum wage annually at the rate of inflation. I believe it is the right thing to do. Yesterday I brought a petition into the House about just that. Residents in my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt expect the government to work with them, thus increasing the protection for Ontario's vulnerable workers.

The Ontario government will also expand its commitment to expand our Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative and investment in our Affordable Housing Program. This expansion will increase the support for developmental services and increase investments in the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. Some of us in this chamber including you, Mr. Speaker, were part of the select committee to deal with developmental services. We heard time and time again, from the various witnesses across Ontario their concern about the issue of affordable housing and access to affordable housing for those individuals who need it, especially for those with developmental disabilities.

So our plan in Ontario is the right plan for all Ontarians. It is a plan that builds Ontario up. In the case of public transit and infrastructure, we're literally building it up. I know that the people of Scarborough—Agincourt, where I come from, will appreciate this building up of Ontario.

Tackling gridlock, improving public transit and creating jobs, growing the economy and helping Ontarians

have more time with their family instead of being stuck in traffic—all of us have those experiences. Just this morning when I was travelling from my riding here, it took me more time—even though this is a summer month—than normal to get here. So I know Ontarians expect us to address their traffic concerns.

It is also a plan that will respect the ideals of accountability and transparency. That way Ontarians can be confident that the decisions made in this government are the right decisions at the right time, and done in an open and an honest manner.

Our plan is also making the right investments to spur growth, create jobs and support our children, and address those challenges that are facing Ontario. We've all seen those challenges across Ontario; we don't have to look far. Recent tragedies in my colleague's riding, the member from Eglinton—that tragedy. Yes, we need to do more, and the government is addressing that piece.

We also have to attack the youth unemployment rate—I heard that yesterday and from previous speakers about the throne speech. We all acknowledge our youth unemployment rate in Ontario is not acceptable. Here in Ontario, we will be addressing this.

As well, we also need to be a leader when it comes to climate change because we know that climate change is not just about a one-time storm but that it also affects our livelihood. It also creates potential tragedy. Hopefully we can try to prevent that.

Our government knows that we cannot find a solution alone. That's why in the throne speech we asked all Ontarians to work together and form a partnership, and again commit ourselves to working with partnerships at all levels of government. Ontarians ask us to work in partnership, not in partisanship. I look forward to, in this session, working with all members of this House but also asking all Ontarians to come together despite various political convictions to build Ontario up.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments? The member for Caledon.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Dufferin—Caledon. Don't lose half of my riding, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): It has been a long break.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I know. It's great to see you back in the Chair.

I just want to comment briefly. Part of what the member spoke about was lauding and applauding the fact that there would be, and I believe I quote you properly when I say, "Full-day kindergarten available in every school across Ontario." I beg to differ. Actually, if you speak to your member from Newmarket, I'm sure that he will give you some very specific examples of communities and schools that will not be offering full-day kindergarten in the coming fall session. So it's important that people understand: Full-day kindergarten will not be available in every single school in Ontario. While I appreciate that I cannot correct another member's record, I think it's important to get some facts out there. Perhaps if she could, as I say, talk to her member from Newmarket—Aurora,

she would understand that there are some very specific examples and quite heated debates about it.

0920

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I was listening very closely to the comments the member from Scarborough—Agincourt was providing during her 20-minute speech. She talked a lot about co-operation, collaboration and partnership. I'm looking forward to seeing that happen. It's something that I strived for in the last Legislature, where we sat here and there were a lot of ideas that were provided from our caucus that, yes, were taken in by the government, which enhanced and made the lives of Ontarians that much better. I look forward to seeing some of that.

Again, I need to stress that I'm a little bit concerned with the tone that I'm hearing from across the way. There is definitely some very—anyways, I'm just concerned with some of the tone that I'm hearing.

I also heard how important transportation is for the member in her particular area. Coming from northern Ontario, it's imperative that we get a good transportation strategy coming from this government. We've lost—well, we haven't lost it yet, but we're still fighting for it; we've got to make sure that we maintain the transportation that we need. What we're talking about is not particularly mechanical pieces of equipment, although the ONTC falls under that, and we would love to see the ONTC return to northern Ontario because it helps our economy and it helps industry. We need to see investment into the roads that are going to be in northern Ontario, not only in building those roads and bridges but also maintaining them. It is a huge concern for people in northern Ontario.

Affordability measures are something that I heard day in and day out while knocking on doors. It is so hard for people to make decisions based on, "Am I going to have enough to buy my prescription? Am I going to have enough to pay the rent? Am I going to have enough to pay the hydro?"

We're going to be providing those solutions. They were part of our campaign, so I would encourage the member: Look at some of those ideas, and when we do bring them as solutions, take them in.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Hon. David Zimmer: The throne speech was entitled Building Ontario Up. A lengthy speech, 16 pages, but in two minutes, how would one summarize the gist of the throne speech; that is, our plan for the next four years?

There are four key points in the throne speech when you distill it down to its essence. Number 1, we want to build the talents and skills of our people through education and training, and we're going to do that for everyone in Ontario. The second point is, we want to build better public transit in cities and better roads to connect towns with rural and remote communities that feed Ontario's prosperity. The third point is, we want to build a competitive business climate through partnerships

with the private sector and increased trade missions that will guarantee good job opportunities for today's workforce and lead to the next generation of jobs in Ontario. And the fourth point is, we want to build a retirement security plan with a made-in-Ontario pension plan that puts a comfortable and secure retirement on the horizon for every worker.

Speaker, if you read through it, and I urge anyone watching this telecast this morning—if you were to read through the 16 pages of the throne speech, those four points that I've just outlined distill what we're trying to do here in Ontario. With a majority government, we are committed to making sure that those four key points that are explained in greater detail in the 16-page throne speech are covered. That's why the throne speech is entitled Building Ontario Up: because since the recession set in in 2008, there have been some very difficult times. We are now in a rebuilding phase. Those are the four key points covered in the throne speech. I urge the audience to consider reading it in its full detail.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments? There being none, response?

Ms. Soo Wong: I want to thank the members from Dufferin—Caledon, Algoma—Manitoulin, and the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

I heard very loud and clear my colleague from Algoma—Manitoulin talking about the transit piece. I think that across Ontario, Ontarians expect us and this government to address the whole issue of transit, and that's why in this throne speech we made a commitment of \$29 billion, of which \$14 billion is addressing northern and rural areas and \$15 billion is for the greater Toronto and Hamilton area.

I also know that across Ontario, Ontarians expect that this government will continue to improve the lives of all Ontarians, because at the end of the day, why are people electing us to government if we're not going to improve their everyday lives? The most important part of the throne speech, Mr. Speaker, is focusing on jobs. My colleague the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs talks about rebuilding and also addressing many of the key priorities of the government, from jobs to public education to public transit, but also making sure Ontario continues to be a fair and just society, as well as at the same time making sure Ontario continues to grow and to spend within its means.

I want to thank everybody who contributed to my debate, but also to encourage all of us to work collaboratively and partnership-wise, like my colleague from Algoma—Manitoulin talked about earlier. We need to work together in partnership, not as adversaries in partisanship.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Thank you very much, Speaker. Before I get going, allow me to congratulate our Speaker, the MPP from Brant, who was in the Chair earlier, on his re-election as Speaker. Congratulations to you, as well, on your role, and the other deputy speakers.

Speaker, I will be the last PC MPP speaking to the throne speech. It is an honour to rise and speak for the first time since the 41st Parliament was elected and an honour to rise to help respond to the throne speech on behalf of the official opposition. I want to spend a few moments thanking some people in my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex who are very important to me. They volunteered and worked on our vision for a better Ontario and took time out of their busy lives to improve democracy.

Before I do that, I want to welcome the new members of provincial Parliament. Congratulations on your election victories. I've had the opportunity to meet a number of you, and let me say that I can see why and how you were elected. You bring many talents and strengths to this office, and I wish you, in all sincerity, the best of luck, and my most sincere congratulations on your electoral success.

I can remember when I was first elected in 2011. I can remember standing in this House and delivering my first speech, my maiden address. I remember taking the time to thank and recognize the previous office-holder in my riding, Liberal MPP Maria Van Bommel, for her efforts, and I can remember reading the remarks in that very first speech. It's a special time, and I applaud all members of this House on their election and re-election.

Speaker, for those of us who are returning and for those who are watching at home, I think all will agree that we need to improve the decorum in this place. Members on all sides of the House have an opportunity to do this, as it is the new beginning of a new session, a new Parliament, and we have four and a half years until the next election. Speaker, we need to raise the bar in Ontario on how we do politics. I, for one, admit that, and I and others here have a role to play in this. I know it is something that your office has worked tirelessly on yourself. I think that the people of this province want us to work together, raise the decorum at Queen's Park, and change the way we do politics, and I know it's something that I'm committed to doing. This is something that I heard, and I'm sure all MPPs heard, throughout the recent election campaign, something that I heard at the doors, whether they were blue doors, red doors or orange doors, and something that I know to be true. But, Speaker, with the new class of MPPs, as I have said, we have the opportunity to do things differently and we have the opportunity to change the way politics is done here in our province. Moving forward, we have the opportunity to make positive changes, starting here at Queen's Park.

People all over Ontario are discouraged at the direction we're heading in, discouraged at the current employment prospects and discouraged with their own situation, but in the long term, the residents of Ontario like myself and like members of the official opposition remain optimistic that our best days remain ahead of us, and that we will turn the corner and begin to see improvements and gains here in our province. It's going to take effort and hard work and it's going to take some sacrifice now, but with this, better days are ahead. I know this because

of the heart and because of the talent of the people in my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex who rolled up their sleeves and got involved in the recent provincial election.

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Of course, Speaker, I need to recognize and thank my parents, Gary and Susan McNaughton; my sister, Nicole Windsor, and her husband, Jeff; my niece, Aleks; my brother, Mike, and his wife, Monica; my nephew, Jordan, and niece, Sydney; Paul Gunning; Don Adams; Dale Maris; Evelyn Towers; Bonnie and Gerald Gallant; Scott Bork; Rick Devolder; Bill Namink; and members of my office staff: Eileen McCoy, John Fraser, Jena Sasko and Joshua Workman, not to mention the hundreds of others who took a sign, knocked on doors in their neighbourhood, distributed literature or simply attended an event; and the voters, those who took the time from their busy lives to come out and vote and come out and participate in our democracy. Thank you.

As I say, Speaker, it's from people like this and their passion and enthusiasm for Ontario that I know deep down that the residents of Ontario, like myself and MPPs here, are very optimistic that we can roll up our sleeves to start to turn things around.

Along with these folks, I was very lucky to have a group of lifelong Liberals in my riding supporting me as well. I work hard to serve everyone in our community, and it certainly helped at campaign time. Former Kent county Liberal member of Parliament Rex Crawford played a big role in my campaign, as did former Middlesex Liberal MP Garnet Bloomfield. A former federal Liberal candidate and former mayor of Wallaceburg, Jeff Wesley, assisted me at the grand opening of our Wallaceburg office and was a key adviser on my team, as was former Liberal member of Parliament Rose-Marie Ur's four-time campaign manager Dr. Thomas Wolder of Strathroy.

It was a fun group down in Lambton–Kent–Middlesex and a fun campaign. We were able to work for all the people in our first term. I thank our office team the most for their outstanding customer service.

We have a customer service guarantee in our riding offices. If a constituent calls or writes, they'd better have a phone call back to them and some action on their file within 24 hours. I try to make those calls myself. It is something I learned in the retail business, something that is very important to me and something that I most strongly recommend to the new MPPs in this House. I hope they consider implementing this policy in their offices. I think it helps the people in this province that we're elected to serve.

Most importantly, I must also take a moment to recognize my wife, Kate Bartz, and my daughter, Annie. In fact, the day of the election, our daughter, Annie, turned 10 months old. I always thought that was going to be my good luck charm, Speaker, and it most certainly was. As some of you can tell by following me on Twitter or Facebook, or if you see our family at Queen's Park or in our community, my wife and daughter are my life. They are one of the reasons why I'm so passionate about

politics in Ontario and why I want to dedicate my time here to make things better for our generation and the next.

I remember how I got interested in politics at a very young age—in grade 6, as a matter of fact. It was reading about my grandfather, Jack McNaughton, and how he worked for a couple of decades at having a hospital built in a southwestern Ontario town called Newbury, my hometown. My grandfather passed away at a young age, a number of years before I was born, but it was reading about how he worked and worked to have his dream of that town having a hospital built that got me interested in politics all the way back in grade 6. He literally dedicated a large portion of his life to seeing his dream realized, but it was a dream to have a hospital built for the people of that region. This, to me, is what service and dedication is all about.

My grandfather is the reason why I ran for town council at the age of 20—part-time, by the way—to fight for that same hospital he had built a generation before. I remember finding one of his business cards as a young kid. On the back of every single business card that my grandfather gave out, he had the following verse:

“I expect to pass through this world but once. If there is any good thing I can do for my fellow man, let me not defer nor neglect it. Let me do it now as I may not pass this way again.”

This is why each of us is here in this building and why we have been elected by our communities. We are here to make things better for average, everyday, ordinary people in this province. It's not about red ridings or blue ridings or orange ridings. It's not about urban or rural, new Canadian versus old. It's not about union worker or non-union worker. It is about all of Ontario and rebuilding this province again to make it the leader in Canada that it very well should be.

Unfortunately, the recent throne speech, which was delivered on July 3 by our Lieutenant Governor, signals the same unrealistic and unaffordable plan that the government brought forward prior to the election. It was very clearly stated that the government intends to reintroduce the same budget tabled in this chamber on May 1 and anticipates its speedy passage after its introduction.

We do have some concerns about this budget and the direction that the current government is outlining, as I suspect a certain segment of the population in the province does as well.

June will likely mark the 90th consecutive month our province's unemployment rate has been higher than the national average. For those who were here as part of the 40th Parliament, you will know that the monthly job numbers are something that I and other MPPs like to keep track of. I think it's an important metric for MPPs to have in their mind when we're doing the work here at Queen's Park on behalf of the people. If people aren't working, if there aren't good jobs for the people of our communities, our work is not complete.

Our energy rates are the highest in North America. Businesses and job creators are literally pulling their

investments from Ontario and moving them south of the border in search of cheaper energy, and this is costing all of our communities.

Of course, the debt outlook—and we've heard a lot about that this week—has recently been changed from stable to negative by Moody's, which will surely lead at some point to higher interest rates and the underfunding of more services like we've seen in the past, whether that's home care, seniors physiotherapy or nursing.

Earlier in the week, our leader, MPP Jim Wilson, outlined how, because interest rates today are at 20-year lows, they can only go up and how each one-point increase in interest rates will equal a \$3-billion increase in our interest payments—this is some scary stuff. I know in my riding a number of municipal mayors have brought this up because they understand that a credit downgrade will affect our local towns and cities as well.

When the interest rates start to rise, just at the time that families in Ontario will begin to get squeezed on their credit cards, on their mortgages and on their car payments, that's when the province will likewise begin to feel the same squeeze; that's when our province will be forced to react and forced to make serious choices. I fear that this is when the government will begin to cut back on important front-line services that Ontario residents count on day in and day out.

Why does this matter? Well, it matters because the third-largest expenditure in government, after health care and education, is the interest on money borrowed. I know a number of MPPs have brought this up a number of times, but I think it bears being brought up once again. Ontario currently spends \$11 billion per year on this interest. This money doesn't pay for anything new, just on interest payments for previous spending—\$11 billion per year gone on interest payments alone. Make no doubt, we have major challenges in this province, but most importantly, families are struggling and people are having trouble making ends meet.

In southwestern Ontario, where I'm from, we're seeing record numbers of factories closing. People in my riding who made \$40 an hour five years ago, some of them are now making \$12.50, while their expenses and daily costs are continuing to rise. This is just a fact of life right now. Again, I think all MPPs of all stripes are hearing this story.

I grew up working in our family's hardware store. We sold hardware, building supplies and car parts. We have 65 employees, some of the best people and hardest workers that you'll ever meet. Up until I was elected in 2011, I continued working in our small business. Working in the store made me really see struggles that everyday, regular people have on a daily basis. I was one to spend as much time as possible serving customers on the floor—I'm not one to sit in an office. It was important for me to know exactly what our customers were thinking.

I bring this with me to this job, as many other MPPs do in this chamber as well. These are the people we must be thinking about, and these are the people who are being

left behind in Ontario today. They don't have fancy organizations and expensive lobbyists representing them and they don't have the press gallery's daily attention, but these ordinary, everyday people are the ones we need to be thinking of when we work and debate here at Queen's Park. Sometimes I get the sense that governments of all political stripes, and in all time periods, forget what those people who walk in the doors of a hardware store are thinking. We must never forget. These are people out there facing challenges, very serious challenges. It's why we need to ensure that taxes are affordable, that government is the least intrusive possible so that people can focus their time on building their careers and looking after their families.

0940

Speaker, these are interesting times here in our province. I'm pleased and honoured and very humbled to have been re-elected by the residents of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex to continue to serve as their MPP, and I'm pleased to be here as part of the 41st Parliament with many other MPPs from across the province.

My mission over the next four-plus years will be to bring forward good, solid ideas, bring them here to Queen's Park for debate, for discussion and hopefully for implementation. I want to stand up for the everyday, ordinary Ontario resident, to stand up for Main Street, not Bay Street. There is a lot of work to be done, and as a young father who helped run a family business before I was elected, I know that the future of our province is at stake.

Once again, congratulations to all MPPs on their election on June 12, and I look forward to working with you over the next four years.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It's a pleasure to rise to respond to my colleague, my friend from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex on his response—his speech to the throne speech.

I want to congratulate the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. He and I were elected in 2011. I think we now feel a little bit like veterans here, which is an interesting feeling. I can tell you that he is an honourable member, someone who brings a lot of experience to this chamber, not only as a small business owner in a family business but also as a young parent, something that he and I have in common. I often see his wife and his child here, and I'm a little bit envious that he lives an hour and a half, roughly, closer to Queen's Park than I do, so it means that my family doesn't get here as quickly as his does. But I do appreciate that he includes his family in all of his workings here and mentions them, and references the challenges of parents and young families in the province of Ontario. I think he brings that to the table quite effectively.

He also mentioned something that I picked up on in terms of looking to accentuate or help the tone, the tenor and the decorum in this House. It's something that I appreciate, something that I think he is fully capable of

doing, given his demeanour. It's something that I think is in contrast, although, to the demeanour that was presented by the official opposition, so it's something that I welcome. I hope that is a change that comes about in this place because it can only make this chamber more productive, more fruitful and more collegial. I guess in these early days of the Legislature, something that I do appreciate is the collegiality of our tone here and the fact that we're all getting along quite nicely, but I'm sure there will be instances where we get into it and have our ideas and values clash. But that's what this place is all about and I am looking forward to doing that with the honourable member in concert.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: It's an absolute honour and privilege to rise today in the Legislature for the first time representing my riding of Mississauga-Brampton South after my re-election on June 12, 2014.

To begin with, I would like to thank the constituents of Mississauga-Brampton South for re-electing me a third time and putting their trust in me.

I also want to congratulate all the members of this House for their election successes. A big welcome to new members and welcome back to all those members who have returned.

It was a real pleasure to hear from the member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex acknowledging our former colleague, Maria Van Bommel, for her hard work in building her community up. She was a champion of her community.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, we went through, in the past month, an election which Ontarians never wanted and they never deserved. However, Ontarians elected a Liberal majority government on June 12, 2014.

As promised, the Legislature is back, just 20 days after the election, and our Premier, the Honourable Kathleen Wynne, is very eager to implement our plan, a plan which is a very positive plan, a very progressive plan, a constructive plan not a destructive one, a plan in which we will put forward evidence before ideology, and partnership before partisanship.

We are looking forward to working for every single member of this House so that we can create opportunities and security for every single citizen in every region of this province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Julia Munro: It gives me great pleasure to take the next few moments to respond to the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex and his comments about the throne speech.

One of the things that I would take a moment to dwell on is one of the skeletons in the closet that come from the past. In that, I am referring to the issues around the finances of the province. While the throne speech provided an opportunity for the government to lay out a vision, there's the spectre, in the background, of the finances. The fear of a downgrade, the impact of the servicing of

the debt—these are giant ghosts that are in the back-ground.

The fear of the downgrade, of course, means that people would see the interest rate for borrowing climb, or they would see the reluctance of investors to make those kinds of investments that we are asking, to be able to keep a \$300-billion debt.

These are the kinds of issues that need to give people some concern and recognize that that amount of debt service charge is an impediment to being able to provide opportunity, service and programs and help to the residents of this province.

Those are the issues that we need to address as a Legislature and something that the government has to take very seriously.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Joe Cimino: Thank you to the member, and thank you, Speaker. Thank you to the member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex for his comments. A lot of the comments you made are issues that were running through my mind. In a time when we knocked on thousands of doors over the last few weeks of the campaign, we heard quite clearly that people do want change. I thank you for your comments.

We talk about being collegial within this chamber and, Speaker, that is extremely important and I know you will lead us in some decorum here with your experience. But we do also have to take into account the fact that consultation—I urge the government to remember that consultation with stakeholders is extremely important, consultation with our municipal partners is extremely important, and consultation with those who use our services, and their families, is extremely important.

I'll touch on a couple. For example, the Poverty Reduction Strategy: It's all nice to talk the talk, but what I heard very clearly from our stakeholders in greater Sudbury is that we want to be heard too. Whether you went to the Salvation Army, whether you went to the soup kitchens, the people told me very clearly, "Sit with us and we'll tell you not to just throw money at the issue, but we'll tell you how to do it properly."

In terms of climate change, we lost a young fellow—I think it was August 26, 2007—Adam Dickie, because of climate change issues. We believe what happened there was a 100-year storm that raised Junction Creek levels very quickly. We, as municipal leaders, took charge. Councillor Jocelyne Landry-Altmann and myself set up an education committee.

So we can talk climate change—it's a very important topic—but we must also, again, consult with those who are dealing with the issues municipally and come up with some solutions including education.

Affordability: Again, I said it in my inaugural speech. My colleague here to the right also just mentioned it. People are concerned. Hydro rates are too high. We need to work with our communities and listen to what their needs are.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, you have two minutes for a response.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Thanks to the members who provided some comments. To my friend from Essex, although on a different political team here at Queen's Park, I consider him a friend. We've had a beer together a time or two. He mentioned us being veterans now because we're in our second term—I wouldn't go that far. I would consider my friend from the Liberals, the MPP for St. Catharines, a true veteran here at Queen's Park. In fact—and we've talked about this a number of times—I remember as a legislative page all the way back in 1991 serving the MPP from St. Catharines water myself. So we've known each other for a long time—and of course, the member from York Centre, Mr. Kwinter, as well. These are two fine and distinguished MPPs. Even though they're on the other side of the aisle, I have the utmost respect for them.

Thanks to the members from Mississauga-Brampton South, York-Simcoe and the new member from Sudbury. Thank you very much. I will say I spend a lot of time in Sudbury. My wife's family is from there, so we make a number of visits up there each year. You come from a great community.

You're going to be following in big footsteps. Mr. Bartolucci was a great MPP for the city of Sudbury. I know you'll do a great job as well, so congratulations on your electoral victory.

I do think we have an opportunity to raise the decorum in the House. I reflect back on some of the debates we had over the last two and a half years. Whether that was because it was a minority situation or not, I don't know. I guess, for me, I'll find that out going forward. I think we all have individual responsibilities to raise the decorum. We can do a lot better for the people who sent us here, and I know I'm going to personally commit to doing that myself.

I look forward to the 41st Parliament and to working with everyone. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 42(a), there have been 12 hours of debate on the motion for an address in reply to the speech from the throne. I am now required to put the question.

On July 7, 2014, Ms. Vernile moved, seconded by Mr. Rinaldi, that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

"To the Honourable David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

"We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session."

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Would this vote be taken as a deferred vote? Agreed? Agreed.

Vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Orders of the day?

Hon. James J. Bradley: No further business, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 0954 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I'm pleased to introduce a couple of friends of mine who are here to observe question period and a visitor from out of country. My visitor is Joseph Jeyaraman. He's a visiting businessman and a justice of the peace in Sri Lanka. He's accompanied by Mr. Mano Kanagamany and Mr. Rajakulendran Sundaram in the east gallery.

Mrs. Ann Hoggarth: Good morning. Our guests are the family of page captain Brendan Sheppard from Barrie: his mother, Sheila Atkinson; and his sister, Linnea Sheppard. Welcome, and enjoy.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm happy to see once again a sunny smile from Zack Goldford from my riding of Thornhill.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Good morning, Speaker. I'd like to introduce two of my best friends in the entire world from Windsor—Tecumseh: lawyer Thomas MacKay and his spouse, noted educator Darren Stanley.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'd like to introduce Matt Caron, the director of advocacy for the College Student Alliance organization, and Jaclyn Wingfield, the communications intern for the College Student Alliance. Welcome.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am delighted to welcome two dear, dear friends, Alana Kitley and Tara McDonnell, both with London roots and both serving as interns this summer. Welcome.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I would like to welcome the Hodgins family, Allan, Charisma, Andrew and Keira, who are here to support page Ashley Bowes, and they are from the lovely riding of Durham.

Mr. Michael Harris: Although not here, I'd like to welcome former MPP for Durham John O'Toole, who I know has tuned in at home on television.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Hi, John.

I'd like to welcome Adrian Kupescic, one of the proudest residents of Don Valley East, who's joining us here today.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I want to introduce our summer intern for the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, Shahene Patel, who is visiting: a University of Toronto student learning all about northern Ontario and already an expert. Welcome, Shahene.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I wish to introduce the family members of our page captain of the day, Eric Wood, who

is from my riding of Davenport. I extend a warm welcome to his mother, Pauline Wood; his grandmother, Barbara Wood; and his younger brother, Adam Wood. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On behalf of the member from Oshawa, page captain Ashley Bowes' mother, Katherine Bowes; father, Scott Bowes; sister, Amber Bowes; grandmother, Ilah Dalke, and grandfather, Denis Dalke; and family friends Andrew Hodgins, Keira Hodgins, Allan Hodgins and Charisma Hodgins. We welcome them to the gallery today. Welcome.

ORAL QUESTIONS

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Steve Clark: Speaker, my question is through you to the Premier. Good morning, Premier.

Premier, you can implement your mandate with your Liberal majority, but it doesn't mean you have to break the rules of the Legislature. The standing orders state that the membership of committees must be in proportion to the representation of the parties in the House. This has been a long-standing tradition that your government House leader rejects.

Your speech from the throne states that you will pledge partnership over partisanship, that you want to increase transparency and accountability and that you want to allow the justice committee to write its report. It's sheer arrogance for your party to change the rules of this Legislature.

Premier, why are you trying to prevent the opposition from holding your government to account?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the House leader will have more to say and that this is an ongoing discussion among the House leaders, but let's talk about tradition. For decades, a majority in the House has meant a majority on committees, and that is a principle that every party in this House, when they have been in government and in the majority, have argued for. That has been reflected in the committee structure.

We're not aware of any instance in the history of this Legislature where that has not been the case. In fact, it would be arrogance, I would suggest, to propose otherwise than that we follow that tradition of when there is a majority of seats in the House, that majority is reflected in committees.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Steve Clark: Back to the Premier: The government House leader understands that according to the current rules he can strike all the standing committees today with a substantive motion. However, in order to do so, he'd have to apply the long-standing formula that requires proportional representation of the parties in the Legislature. That would mean that you would have five Liberal members, two PC members and two NDP members.

Ornge, eHealth, the gas plants, the MaRS building bailout—all of those scandals happened on the Liberals' watch, and they came out because the opposition held the government to account.

Premier, your throne speech stated that you want to increase transparency. Is your first order of business to backtrack on that commitment by trying to stack the committees against the opposition?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I thank the member opposite for his question, and I'm very much looking forward to discussing all of these issues in our House leaders' meeting. I find it odd that the member opposite has chosen to raise these issues here in the House, inasmuch as he's aware that these are discussions that are limited to House leaders.

But the rules are very clear. The convention is very clear, as the Premier mentioned. If you look back throughout the history of this Parliament, going back decades, we have seen that whenever there is a majority in the House all committees have also demonstrated a simple majority for the government. That means that we don't count the Chair in that calculation, because, as you know, Speaker, the Chair is an impartial person, and they cannot be calculated in that configuration.

I would simply ask the member opposite that we work within the traditions of this House to make sure that the House is reflected in committee.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Mr. Steve Clark: Well, again, Speaker—I'm going to read you a couple of quotes. Here are a couple of quotes for you: "The rules say two important things: (1) committees can have no more than nine members; and (2) committee membership must be in proportion to the representation of the parties in the House." Who said that, Premier? The dean of the Legislature, the member for St. Catharines. That was his quote.

Here's another quote, from the Minister of Education: "... one of the principles on which standing committee membership is normally structured, which is proportional representation..." Proportional representation means if you've got nine members on a committee, you'll have five members from the Liberal Party, two members from the PC Party, and two members from the NDP. Five members provide a majority of representation in the House.

Why is the government House leader continuing to try to muzzle the opposition by not following the conventions of this Legislature?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, since we are quoting things to each other, let me just quote the previous House leader for the PC Party, now the Leader of the Opposition. This is what he said in 2011, after the minority government was elected. He said, "The official opposition is in the belief that the government does not have a majority in the House, and therefore should not have a majority on committees."

The NDP House leader, the member from Timmins—James Bay, said, "Our proposals have been based on precedent—"

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm going to send him a calculator.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And I'm going to send you out if I have to. You asked a question. Listen to the response.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And the interjection is not helpful, either.

Stop the clock. From what I've heard, I've decided that I'm going to do what I did yesterday. I'm going into warnings.

Finish, please.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: The member from Timmins—James Bay, who is the NDP House leader, said on December 7, 2011, "Our proposals have been based on precedent which dictates that a government which does not have a majority in the House does not have the majority on committees." Speaker, we only ask that the inverse be true as well.

1040

INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE

Mr. Monte McNaughton: My question this morning is to the Premier. Premier, as you know, Moody's debt service recently downgraded Ontario's debt outlook from stable to negative, which will surely lead to increased costs and more underfunding of important services for average, everyday people in our province.

Premier, we recommend that you take urgent action today to come up with ways of growing our economy to ensure our health care and education systems are protected. Here is one that makes good sense to me: Premier Brad Wall of Saskatchewan has been advocating for a Canada-wide free trade zone. There is a tremendous potential to create good jobs for people and help small businesses grow here in the province.

Premier, do you see anything wrong with a Canada free trade zone as advocated by Premiers Wall, Clark and Hancock?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I have trouble with that too, sometimes.

It actually is a very important issue and a question, and something Ontario has always taken a lead on. We have advocated across this country for freer trade among provinces. In fact, Mr. Speaker, our exports are valued at over \$122 billion as of 2012, and 33% of Ontario's gross domestic product is made up of interprovincial trade accounts. So that's very important to us.

We will continue to work with our sister provinces across this country to open up freer trade. Our priority is making sure we answer to the challenges our business community may have when the Canada-European trade agreement comes in place. We want to make sure that no Canadian business is at a disadvantage. That's our first

priority. We'll work with the other provinces to ensure we achieve that, and if we can move further, we certainly would like to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Back to the Premier: Premier, last week, Moody's put the province on a credit watch and revised the outlook in Ontario from stable to negative. At the same time, Premier, your counterparts from across the country are focused on providing more consumer choice, lower prices, more jobs and, ultimately, increased revenue for their provincial treasuries. Of course, I'm referring to Premiers Brad Wall, Christy Clark, Dave Hancock, Stephen McNeil and Robert Ghiz, who are all actively working on a Canada-wide free trade zone.

Premier, this is about nation-building, growing our economy and giving opportunities to our small businesses along Main Street here in Ontario. Premier, why haven't you called Premier Brad Wall and others to get started on this deal immediately, and why isn't Ontario at the head of the table?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, the member is very far behind on this file. The ministers have been speaking for some time on this issue. In fact, the ministers right across the country had a conference call earlier in the week.

As sister provinces continue to work together, it's important that the views of all provinces, including Ontario, be taken into consideration in terms of how to move forward in these freer trade discussions amongst the provinces. We're all in favour of doing that, Mr. Speaker. We now need to work together to ensure we put in place the best process.

Our Premier will be, as she was with the Canada Job Grant and others, a leader in this area of nation-building across this country. We'll work closely with the western provinces, the eastern provinces and Quebec. We're determined to ensure that we do the best job we can for Canadian businesses.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Back to the Premier: Premier, having negotiated over 40 international trade deals since coming into office, the federal government has done an outstanding job at opening trade barriers throughout the world. However, within Canada, there are a significant number of trade barriers in numerous sectors, including energy, labour and procurement. These barriers are costing average, everyday people, with reduced opportunities, fewer jobs and higher consumer prices.

Premier, the people of Ontario are counting on you to take the lead on important opportunities for our workers in small businesses. Premier, this is about Main Street, not Bay Street. Over the days ahead, what specific actions will you commit to with Ontario's participation in the job-creating Canada-wide free trade zone?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I'm really glad that the member brought up Stephen Harper today, because I

think what we want to do is ask the member if he's going to support our efforts to ensure that the federal government treats Ontario fairly when it comes to equalization payments and treats Ontario fairly when it comes to investments and infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, we're talking about—and my predecessor at Infrastructure was very clear on this: We're spending six times more when it comes to investing in public transit than the federal government is spending. I don't think you can find a country anywhere in the world where that exists. I believe my predecessor said that it's 26 times more that this province is spending on building roads, highways and bridges. That is not good partnership when it comes to partnerships between the federal and provincial government.

So I'm hoping that the member opposite listens carefully to this and joins us in our efforts to make sure that Ontario gets fair treatment when it comes to our relations with the—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The Premier insists that she's bringing a progressive plan, and she's got a list that she loves to rhyme off, but there's another list in her budget that Bloomberg says will lead to the "biggest Ontario cuts since Harris."

I'm just curious to know whether the Premier will be running with both of these lists next week. Will she introduce a budget on Monday that includes having a Conservative-style fire sale of Ontario's public assets in it, Speaker?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The leader of the third party knows what our budget is going to say on Monday, Mr. Speaker, because we are reintroducing the budget that we introduced at the beginning of May. We then ran our election campaign on that plan.

The reality of our plan is that there is complexity to it. The fact is, we are facing fiscal challenges. That is true. But the other fact is, we are determined not to leave people behind. We are determined to build the province up. We are determined to invest in people's talent and skills.

The Minister of Economic Development was just talking about the investments in infrastructure. We are determined that we continue the investments—

Interjection.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: One of the members opposite heckles that it won't happen. The reality is, it's already happening. You look at the investments in infrastructure that this government has made. You look at the investments in education and in health care. We are going to continue to build this province—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: So that's a yes for the fire sale of public assets.

There's a number of things, however, that the Premier has left off of her list. Families across Ontario are finding it harder than ever just to make ends meet.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. The member from Glangarry—Prescott—Russell is warned.

Carry on.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Families across Ontario are finding it harder just to make ends meet. It's one of the reasons that they actually voted against austerity. They shouldn't go into a cold sweat every time they see their hydro bill. Leaving families working harder and harder just to pay the bills, Speaker, isn't progressive.

When the Premier introduces her budget next week, will it get electricity bills under control for the good people of this province? Or will it be the Liberal status quo, with hydro bills going up 42% over the next five years?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I will just to say again to the leader of the third party that it is incumbent upon government to do more than one thing at a time.

The fact is that we are faced with fiscal challenges in this provinces, and we are going to confront those fiscal challenges in a number of ways, Mr. Speaker. The constraints that have been put in place that have made us the leanest government in terms of program spending per capita in the country, we are going to keep those constraints in place. We are going to make sure that we have a reliable energy system that people across the province can count on so that people, whether they are business owners or whether they are individuals, know that they are going to have access to reliable power. And we are going to make sure the infrastructure that is needed across the province: roads, bridges, transit—we are going to invest in that infrastructure.

It is incumbent on us to do all those things at the same time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: So that's yes to a 42% increase in hydro rates.

People want to see a plan that creates job also, and it's pretty obvious that that has been left off the list as well. The same old, same old, no-strings-attached giveaways haven't worked. It's why Ontario's employment rate is stuck at higher than the national average.

Handing money to corporations and hoping for the best is not a progressive value. It hasn't worked for the last eight years. Why does the Premier think that it's going to work all of a sudden?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It's not what we're going to do, and it's not what we have been doing, because the partnerships with business that have brought jobs to this province are just that: They are partnerships. The money that is invested in partnership with business is tied to that job creation.

1050

That's exactly why we're putting in place the Jobs and Prosperity Fund, which will be part of our budget which

will be reintroduced on Monday—the Jobs and Prosperity Fund and Experience Ontario, which will build on the success of the youth employment strategy and will put young people into opportunities where they will have the opportunity to explore a new career path because we've partnered with business.

Those are all things that are part of our budget. Some of them are already in place and are working, but we are building on those successes.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. The Premier likes to pick and choose the parts of her budget that she wants to talk about, but there are some real surprises hidden just under the surface of this Liberal Trojan Horse plan. People across Ontario are wondering whether they are going to be able to afford to retire. When the Premier tables her plan, will she still be moving at lightspeed to create Stephen Harper-approved private pensions by this fall, but leave Ontarians waiting for years—if ever—for a public pension plan?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think what is most surprising about this particular gambit is that we would have expected support for an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan in the absence of federal government leadership on enhancing the CPP. We would have expected that the NDP would have been right there at our side, supporting the creation of an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. They are not there, Mr. Speaker.

Is it important that people have options? And in terms of the PRPPs that the leader of the third party is talking about, will we move to allow people to have those options? Absolutely. But will we move to create an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan so that people can count on a secure retirement? Absolutely we will. It is shocking, quite frankly, that the NDP is not going to support us on that.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: So that's a yes to prioritizing Stephen Harper-style PRPPs.

Another part of her budget that the Premier loves to talk about is her transit plan. She insists it's a progressive plan. Well, here's the truth: The TTC, Metrolinx and the Golden panel all agree that Toronto needs a downtown relief line. Anyone who takes the TTC in rush hour knows that the Yonge line is already packed. Instead, the Liberal plan will simply add more riders to the Yonge line.

A downtown relief line that deals with congestion needs to be a priority. Is the Premier going to keep making things worse during rush hour for TTC riders, or will she put the downtown relief line at the top of the list?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I am just going to go to the general comment here, that in terms of support for transit and putting \$29 billion into transit over the next

10 years, working with municipalities, whether it's on public transit in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area or in Ottawa or in Kitchener-Waterloo or in Hamilton, or whether it is roads and bridges in northern Ontario and in our rural communities, we are committed to doing that. That is in our budget. Again, it would be terrific if we had the support of the NDP on that. Whether it is support for the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan—that is in our budget—we would have expected that the NDP would have supported us on that. Whether it's support for people with developmental disabilities, we would have expected the NDP to support us on that.

Those measures are there. We are reintroducing our budget. We are determined to implement our budget, if we have passage in the Legislature. We think those are things that the NDP should be supporting.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I guess that's a no to the downtown relief line being prioritized.

You know, Speaker, the Premier likes to pick and choose the parts of her plan that she talks about here in the House, but there are other parts that she's a bit reluctant to talk about—like the parts that led Bloomberg News to say, “Wynne's Budget Foretells Biggest Ontario Cuts since Harris”; parts like the new HST loopholes for big businesses and more no-strings-attached corporate giveaways.

Is the Premier still committed to a plan that she insists is progressive, that will leave families paying more, will leave corporations paying less and could lead to the biggest cuts since Mike Harris?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I am and we are committed to the plan that we have put forward and we have put in front of the people of Ontario. We are committed to building this province up. We are committed to making the investments that we know are necessary, and we're committed to doing that in partnership with municipalities, with businesses, with communities across this province. That is a complex interconnection of initiatives. There are transit initiatives. There are retirement security initiatives. There are constraint initiatives in terms of the fiscal realities. All of those things are presented in our budget.

The leader of the third party is right. There is a long list of initiatives that we believe the NDP should support us on, because historically they have supported initiatives that have lifted vulnerable people up and have helped them in their day-to-day lives.

I continue to hope that as we reintroduce our budget we will see the NDP step up and support those measures.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Premier. Premier, families across Ontario are waiting for the final report of the Select Committee on Developmental Services to be released. As you know, the committee

travelled across Ontario and heard from hundreds of individuals and families who need help. Based on that, we wrote a comprehensive report that would have been released on the Monday after the election was called.

Yesterday in the House, the new Minister of Community and Social Services said, “We continue to strengthen the way we provide services to those with developmental disabilities.”

But what we heard in our committee over and over again, Premier, was that the system is broken. We have addressed those systemic problems in our report and have provided concrete solutions.

Premier, my question to you is: Will you commit to re-striking the select committee so this report can be released?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I am extremely interested in the work of the select committee. In fact, this is an issue that a number of us on all sides of the House have been concerned about for some time, which is why, in our budget, there is \$810 million to inject into the system.

I'm very aware that once a young person goes through our education system, at the end of that time, at 21 years of age, when they basically age out from all of the supports that the education system has in place, there is very little. In fact, there isn't a system, and we need a system and we need supports for families. That's why that money is in the budget. That's exactly why we need to work with everyone who has advice for us.

As I said, I'm very interested in the report of the select committee, and I think we should absolutely pay attention to the work that was done there.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Christine Elliott: To the Premier, through you, Mr. Speaker: Committing the money is only one part of the solution. You need to know how to deal with the systemic problems that have been identified by the select committee in a non-partisan way. These are solutions from all three parties.

We've heard from hundreds of families with autistic children who need treatment and help at school, from adults with special needs whose parents cannot take care of them anymore—they're having to drop them off at developmental services offices. We have thousands of young people in Ontario who, when they turn 21, have nothing—no job, no life, no hope.

We've addressed all of those issues in our select committee. I cannot understand why you've committed this money and you don't even want to hear what the select committee has to say.

Today, following question period, I will be asking for unanimous consent to have the select committee re-struck so that it can file its final report and table it with this Legislature. Will you commit to supporting this unanimous consent motion?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings is warned.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): While the clock is stopped, I'm going to remind people that when I do warn you, there is no warning after that. You will be named.

Premier?

1100

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that this issue is part of the discussions that the House leaders are having right now. So I understand the politics of why the member opposite, at least in part, is raising this issue. But I will not take a lecture from a party that was going to cut billions of dollars from services across government. I will not take lessons from that party, when they were going to make those cuts.

The fact is, we have put money in the budget to deal with these issues. I want to hear the advice of the committee. The member opposite knows perfectly well that I want to hear those suggestions. I know that families need support. I know we have to understand how that money should be spent. This is a conversation that's happening right now.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. New question.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Education. Welcome back, Minister. Up to 100,000 infants require child care each year, but there are only 10,000 licensed spaces here in Ontario. There's a child care crisis in this province, yet this government is making matters even worse. Cutting child care funding to 18 communities, from Sarnia to Sudbury, is not progressive. It's not the right thing to do. Will the minister do the right thing and stop these cuts to child care across Ontario?

Hon. Liz Sandals: If I could digress for a moment, this is my first opportunity to speak in the House. I'd like to start off by sending my condolences to Abshir Hassan's family. By all reports, he was a wonderful teacher and a wonderful mentor and role model for the children in his community. Our hearts go out both to his family but also to the Lawrence Heights school community because they obviously are devastated by this loss.

Let's talk about child care here and unpack what the member opposite just said, because the observations he has made are just factually incorrect. If you look at the funding records since 2003, in fact we have added over \$500 million to the child care budget. It's up to close to \$1 billion. That represents a 90% increase in child care funding in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Notwithstanding what the minister had to say, 18 communities are facing substantial loss of child care. That is irresponsible; that is short-sighted. Those communities deserve that funding. Those children

and those families need that funding. No community and no family can afford these cuts to child care. Will the minister explain why she refuses to listen to parents and refuses to stop these child care cuts?

Hon. Liz Sandals: As I say, I'm having trouble understanding the concept of "cut" when in fact we have continually increased the child care budget—

Interjection.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm not sure what my wardrobe has to do with child care, quite frankly. The number of child care—not only has the funding increased; the number of spaces has increased. So in fact, there are 90,000 additional child care spaces since when we took government in 2003. For the first time ever in the province of Ontario, since child care moved to my ministry, we actually have a child care formula which is based on the number of children in the community. For the first time ever, we are funding child care—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timmins–James Bay is warned.

Wrap up, please—10 seconds.

Hon. Liz Sandals: This morning, I was very pleased to announce that we will be reintroducing our Child Care Modernization Act, which will in fact facilitate the creation of additional—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question?

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: My question is for the President of the Treasury Board. Minister, on Tuesday the government reintroduced the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, reaffirming Premier Wynne's commitment to make Ontario the most open and transparent government in the country by doing government differently.

This bill demonstrates that the government is serious about being accountable to the people of Ontario. It would tackle the tough issues and further strengthen political accountability, open up the business of government and strengthen oversight.

The bill also builds on a number of legislative and non-legislative measures our government has already taken, including the Public Sector Expenses Review Act, the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act and our implementation of the IPC's recommendations to enhance responsible government recordkeeping.

Minister, would you please speak to the proposed measures in this bill and how they would increase government accountability?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me start by congratulating the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore on his win. I am sure that he will serve his constituents very, very ably, as he has done at Toronto city council for many years.

Speaker, the proposed accountability act includes a wide range of measures that demonstrate that transparen-

cy and openness are top priorities for this government. It includes a range of measures which would, if passed, strengthen accountability and oversight, including expanding the role of the Ontario Ombudsman to include municipalities, school boards and universities. It would strengthen the Lobbyists Registration Act. It would compel agencies to post their business plans online and set compensation frameworks for BPS executives, including hard caps.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: Thank you to the President of the Treasury Board for detailing the ways in which this government hopes to strengthen accountability.

I also understand that, if passed, the accountability act would require ministers, opposition leaders and all MPPs and staff to post expenses publicly. On this side of the House, government MPPs are already voluntarily posting their expenses online, and I strongly encourage the opposition to follow our lead and echo our commitment to open and transparent government. Another crucial area where we have an opportunity to enhance accountability is in the health sector.

Minister, would you please inform the House about the strong oversight powers included in this proposed act that apply to our air ambulance service, as well as the new patient ombudsman role that will be created?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We are taking some very concrete steps to increase oversight in the health sector. Amendments to the Ambulance Act would allow the government to appoint a supervisor and special investigators. It would protect whistle-blowers who disclose information. Provincial representatives could be appointed to the air ambulance service board of directors, and performance agreements with providers could be set by regulation at any time. Speaker, these are important enhancements.

In addition, a patient ombudsman would be established to help patients resolve complaints they've got with public hospitals, long-term-care homes and community care access centres. This new patient ombudsman would build a much more patient-centred and integrated approach. The patient ombudsman would be independent, with all the powers of the Ombudsman, including being able to initiate investigations as well as being required to make their annual report available to the public.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Attorney General. There was a formal complaint lodged against one of your assistant crown attorneys concerning his conduct against women in the Peel crown's office. According to the sunshine list, this same crown attorney walked away with \$368,000 in 2013—twice his annual salary. Minister, was a full investigation held regarding those allegations?

1110

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Thank you very much for the question. I think it's a very important matter that

you're raising. We have a policy within the government, within our ministry, to make sure that these things are not happening. As you know, we are not talking about these incidents here in the House, but I can assure the member of the opposition that all of these accusations are dealt with within the ministry on a fair and reasonable basis. But I want to reiterate the fact that we have a policy in place in this government to make sure that this does not happen and that when it does happen, proper measures are taken to make sure that it does not happen again.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm not sure the victim in this harassment case believes that it was fair and equitable if you doubled the salary and pay of this person.

In the same week you're promoting your new accountability and transparency legislation in Ontario, the public has the right to know why an assistant crown in your ministry was given \$368,000—twice his annual salary. For what—to go away?

We've since learned that this same individual has now been charged with criminal harassment and assault against two young women.

Minister, tell us why you chose to pay out an assistant crown instead of going through a full investigation to allow the victims and the accused a hearing and punishment if found guilty. Is that the kind of message you want to send to women who are dealing with harassment?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Again, I'm going to reiterate the fact that in this government and in each of our ministries we have the procedure in place to make sure that these actions do not happen. When this happens, measures are being taken to deal with it. With regard to how much was paid to this individual, this was dealt with the same way that these cases were dealt with when you were in power.

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Paul Miller: This is to the minister responsible for the Pan/Parapan Am Games. Speaker, it's a beautiful sunny day today, so I think work is probably being done on the Hamilton stadium. At least, according to the minister, that's when they do their best work—on good-weather days. We know that it's one year until the official opening of the games, so it must be full steam ahead on all the venues.

Can the minister provide us with a new date that the Hamilton stadium will be ready for occupancy—weather permitting, of course?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'm so proud of what we're doing in Ontario in regard to the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games. It's the first time the province has taken on such a large responsibility, not only by itself but working with the federal government and our 50 municipal partners. We are working with our universities and our colleges to put on the largest multi-sport games ever in the history not only in the history of Toronto or the

Golden Horseshoe or Ontario, but the entire country. This is the largest multi-game sport event in the entire country.

We have 31 venues. We have 15 venues that are being refurbished and 10 brand new builds. It is a very complex piece. We have Infrastructure Ontario working with us. We have different ministries working, and we're proud to build the type of infrastructure we need here in Ontario so our athletes can compete not only here but internationally, and so we can attract the type of sporting events we want so Canada can take its stage in the world when it comes to athleticism. I hope the member opposite joins us as we celebrate the Pan Am Games on this special day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Paul Miller: Speaker, with all due respect, the finance minister and the former minister responsible for the Pan/Parapan Am Games mocked my concerns and assured this House on many occasions that, "Everything is fine. We're on schedule. We're on budget." Well, the evidence is in, Speaker. Surprise, surprise. They're wrong. They hired this foreign-led consortium. They set the schedule, but do they have a plan to rein them in and get all the other venues completed on schedule and under budget? We've only got a year to go.

Will this minister tell the House how he's going to ensure that the Pan/Parapan Games venues are his and his government's priority and that they all get completed on time and on budget? I've heard this before from you.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Mr. Speaker, you would think the member opposite would be excited with the fact that we are building a state-of-the-art stadium in Hamilton, in the area that he represents. His team—and I hope he's a fan of the Tiger-Cats—will be able to play in a stadium that holds 22,500 people. I'll tell you, the last time that major infrastructure was put into that building was back in the late 1970s or early 1980s, and it was built back in the 1930s, when we had our last Commonwealth Games here in the province of Ontario, the last multi-sport event.

I would hope that the member opposite would join us as we celebrate our athletes here in Ontario and across Canada and as we bring Toronto and the 15 municipalities onto the international stage so we can show off what we're proud of here in the province of Ontario and in our country.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. New question?

PAN AM GAMES

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: My question is also for the minister responsible for the 2015 Pan Am Games. Minister, people in my riding of Halton are starting to get very excited about hosting the cycling events at the Pan/Parapan American velodrome next summer. Some of the finest cyclists in the world will be competing at the world-class facility. People from all over the globe are expected to visit the region to take in the events.

Now, this is a tremendous opportunity for the town and region to show the world what makes our area so special. The games will put Milton, Halton and Ontario on the map internationally, and the state-of-the-art facility will have a lasting impact on our local athletes, community and economy.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, can he please tell us why the legacies are so important to both Ontarians and Canadians?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I want to congratulate the honourable member on her recent election victory. Congratulations. I know you're going to make the people in your riding very proud.

Today is a special day, Mr. Speaker. It marks the one-year countdown to the 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am Games that are being held here in the GTA and the Golden Horseshoe. I think we should all be happy that we have the ability to host such an incredible multi-sport games here in the province of Ontario.

We're going to see a lot of investment into infrastructure, and we're going to see an investment into infrastructure that will support our athletes here in the province of Ontario.

It's more than just the Pan Am Games. This is about building a legacy for our future athletes here in Ontario, and not only Ontario, Mr. Speaker, but for all Canadians, because we are going from just an average jurisdiction, when it comes to multi-sport venues, to a world-class venue. We'll be able to compete internationally for future events. I think we should be very proud of the investments we're making.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you for your response, Minister.

Halton is definitely gearing up to welcome the world next summer. This will be Milton's time to shine. It's great to see that that the velodrome will be used by residents in my community for years to come. This will truly be the people's games.

I think it is very fitting that the velodrome is located in our community. That's because the roads around our escarpment area are very popular with bike enthusiasts. As Milton's mayor Gord Krantz once said, "Milton and Halton region is a cycling mecca." I understand this will be the only facility of its kind in Canada and one of two in all of North America that will meet top international cycling competition standards.

Mr. Speaker, again, through you to the minister: Can he please explain what other activities the velodrome will be used for once the games are over?

1120

Hon. Michael Coteau: Again, thank you to the member for the question. The games in Milton, in the velodrome, will be able to host not only cycling, but will have access to basketball, volleyball, badminton, a running and jogging track, a fitness centre, studio space and a special area to host special events. This is really for the community of Halton and the people in the surrounding area, and all Ontarians.

The legacy piece, again, is an important piece. As the member for Halton said, Canadians will no longer have to travel into the United States, into California, to train. They'll be able to do it here in Ontario. I think we should be so proud of the fact that we're building that type of legacy infrastructure in Ontario to support our athletes, not only for today but for future generations.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a straightforward question for the Premier. Could she inform the House what she is expecting will be the fastest-growing expense line item in the budget over the next three years?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I can assure the member that Ontario exceeds all other governments in Canada. We have controlled our program spending at 1.4%, which surpasses any government now. We're projecting to lower that program spending to 1.1% going forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I would refer the Premier and the Minister of Finance to page 244 of the 2014 Ontario budget papers. That page shows that the fastest-growing expense line item over the next three years is projected to be interest on the provincial debt. In fact, the average annual growth in our interest costs is expected to be almost 8%. I'll repeat that: an 8% increase per year in our interest costs.

We know that the Liberal government has doubled the provincial debt since taking office. We know that they intend to add \$20 billion to the debt this year alone. We know that interest costs are already the third-biggest expense in the budget, after health and education. We know that a credit rating downgrade is pending, and we know that, with interest costs on the debt going up, available funding for vital services that we all value, like health care and highway expenditures, goes down.

Knowing all that, how on Earth can the government be so fiscally reckless as to table the same budget next Monday as was rejected on May 2?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister.

Hon. Charles Sousa: What the people of Ontario rejected was 100,000 cuts that they were proposing to employees. What the people of Ontario rejected was extreme measures of austerity that would put them in harm's way.

What the people of Ontario accepted was this budget that we're presenting on Monday, a budget that talks about investing in their future so that we can promote more jobs and talks about ensuring that we eliminate the deficit by 2017-18 in a very balanced way. The people recognize that we must take a balanced approach. They know that the rate of interest in Ontario has been sustained for the last 10 years, but we must be mindful not to pass a burden of debt on to future generations.

That's why we are taking the steps necessary to eliminate the deficit. That's why we're taking the steps necessary, through the President of the Treasury Board, to find further savings in the system. That's why we're taking the necessary steps to maximize evaluations of our assets. That's why we're taking the steps necessary to promote more growth in our economy by investing in infrastructure, skills and training.

GENDER IDENTITY

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, yesterday you claimed that you were committed to making sure that your ministry comply with Toby's Act—which, by the way, was tabled five times before your government acted.

As is clear with the Avery Edison case, your ministry has not complied with Toby's Act. In fact, the Ontario government is being sued by Ms. Avery Edison based on discrimination in your ministry and mistreatment because of her gender.

Does the minister intend on fighting her in the courts, or will he be settling?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to thank the member from Parkdale–High Park for asking that question. I think the member opposite will be fully aware of the fact that the particular case that she referenced is before the Human Rights Tribunal, so it would be highly inappropriate for me as the minister to comment on that particular topic.

But as I stated yesterday in this House in response to a question that I received from the member from Ottawa–Orléans, I am very proud to have worked with the member from Parkdale–High Park and the member from Whitby–Oshawa on bringing in Toby's Act and making sure that we protect the rights of our trans community here in Ontario by explicitly including gender expression and gender identity in the Human Rights Code.

In fact, Speaker, we're the first province in Canada to do so, and it's something that we all collectively should be very proud of.

As I stated at the launch of the guidelines by the Human Rights Commission on those particular provisions dealing with gender expression and gender identity, we will consult and work very closely with the commission to get our guidelines in accordance with the law.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Mr. Speaker, Avery Edison was humiliated, she was strip-searched, she was sent to a male prison and she was kept in solitary confinement, all because she is transsexual. She is suing this minister's ministry because of her treatment. The minister claims his government is progressive. A truly progressive government would not fight Avery Edison in the courts. Will the minister commit to settling this matter with Avery Edison, or is he going to drag her through the justice system all over again?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Again, Speaker, I think the member opposite very well knows and all the members in the House know that when a matter is before our courts or a judicial system, it is highly inappropriate for the

ministers to comment on that. Therefore, I cannot speak to the particular facts or to the case.

I do want to mention that our current ministry policy clearly states that the key consideration regarding the care and custody of transgender and intersex inmates is the gender with which the inmate identifies, regardless of whether or not the inmate has undergone medically supportive treatments to align their physical bodies with their gender identity. Further, it states that when transgender and intersex inmates are first admitted to our provincial correctional facilities, these individuals are permitted to choose the gender of the correctional officer who will perform the physical screening or elect to have both male and female staff involved in this process.

We are updating our guidelines and are working very closely with the Human Rights Commission in that regard.

IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

Mr. Yvan Baker: It's an honour for me to stand here in this House with all of you and represent the constituents of Etobicoke Centre. My question is for the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade.

Due to a declining birth rate and an aging population, immigration will play an important role in filling highly skilled labour gaps in Ontario. The federal citizenship and immigration minister announced that he is launching the Express Entry model, formerly known as the Expression of Interest model. The federal government promises that this new model will help Canada's immigration system become more focused on meeting Canada's economic and labour gaps.

We all know that the past federal changes to immigration policies have not always benefited Ontario. We have seen a steady decline in the share of skilled newcomers that we can select, while other provinces, like Alberta and Saskatchewan, have benefited from much larger shares.

How will our government ensure that Ontario is positioned to meet its labour market demands and continue to be a strong economic performer?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you for the question. I want to congratulate the member from Etobicoke Centre. He had a great election win. I'm sure that you're going to serve your constituents to the best of your ability.

Speaker, it's a delay, but I do want to congratulate you for your re-election and still sitting in the best and most comfortable chair in the House.

The member is correct. The federal government announced that it is changing the way the country will process immigration applications. Immigration selection and immigrant settlement services should be a shared responsibility of all levels of government.

I want to make it clear that we are committed to ensuring that Ontario is best positioned to recruit new immigrants now and in future generations. Right now, we are working with provinces and territories to collaborate with the federal government on Express Entry design and implementation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Yvan Baker: I would like to thank the minister for his response and take this opportunity to congratulate him on his new portfolio and his new responsibilities as well.

Ontario is the number one destination in Canada for highly skilled newcomers and families. In fact, I'd like to share a brief anecdote. On Canada Day, I had the opportunity to attend a citizenship ceremony in Etobicoke Centre and was reminded of the diversity of newcomers and the calibre of skills and talents that they bring to our province every single day.

Many highly skilled professionals, like doctors, nurses, engineers and others, come to our province hoping to seamlessly continue their practice and contribute to our vibrant economy. In my riding of Etobicoke Centre, for example, we have a large number of newcomers to Canada from all parts of the world. Although many have been able to find work in their field of practice, some have not been able to find work in their field of study or qualification because their credentials are not recognized here.

1130

Mr. Speaker, how is our government helping highly skilled newcomers become accredited in their field of practice?

Hon. Michael Chan: Speaker, I want to thank him for the question again. One of the main pillars of this government's immigration strategy is to leverage the global connections of our diverse communities. This is why Ontario will contribute more than \$63 million over three years to the Ontario bridge training program.

Ontario's bridge training project helps internationally trained skilled newcomers get licensed and employed in their field without duplicating previous training and education. Bridge training programs include nursing, pharmacy, early childhood education, medical laboratory technology and the skilled trades.

We're on the right track, but we know that more needs to be done to make sure our newcomers can get jobs in their field of practice.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, we are very fortunate to have a unique model of primary health care serving our small rural communities in Parry Sound-Muskoka. Places like Britt, Argyle, Pointe au Baril, Wahta First Nation and Rosseau are well-served by nursing stations. We have seven nursing stations, mainly in Parry Sound district, providing vital primary health care in a very efficient model.

The district of Muskoka has taken note of how well nursing stations are serving Parry Sound district. They have already submitted their plan for new nursing stations to the Ministry of Health. My question: Are you aware of the district of Muskoka plan to improve primary health care in Muskoka with new nursing stations?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question and the reminder of the importance of that great part of our

province, a very lovely, beautiful part of the province. Most importantly, the people there are extremely generous and hard-working.

Of course, anything that has to do with our nursing profession and making sure that, as a government, we improve the services, in this case as provided through our hard-working nurses and nurse practitioners, our RNs, is something that I take very seriously.

I haven't had the opportunity yet; I think the member opposite appreciates my having been in the portfolio for just two weeks. But I will certainly entertain getting to this immediately, asking my officials to brief me on it so I can see the particulars of the proposal.

Perhaps I'll have an opportunity in the supplementary to speak more generally about the important work that our nurses are doing and how we're supporting them to do that work even more effectively.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: Thank you, Minister, for the response. Let me provide some more details.

The district of Muskoka has come up with a made-in-Muskoka health care plan to improve primary health care access based on the success of nursing stations serving Parry Sound communities for many years. Their plan includes new nursing stations in Dorset, Severn Bridge, Port Severn and Port Carling to improve primary health care for the elderly, the low-income and marginalized, and for seasonal residents and tourists.

This improved access to health care services is very important for Muskoka, now and into the future. My question: Will you agree to meet with District Chair John Klinck and consider their plan to spend health care dollars more efficiently and improve primary health care for Muskoka?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Of course I'd welcome the opportunity to meet with the district chair.

Let me say again that in reference to the important work that our nurses across the province do—in fact, I think this was referenced earlier. Since 2003, we have added 20,500 nurses to the province. Many of those—4,000 of those—have been added to the province in the last year alone. We're introducing and increasing the number of nurse-practitioner-led clinics.

I want to speak to the element of this which is perhaps most appealing, and that is that it's a local community, a local district which is coming up with a plan that reflects the unique priorities and circumstances that take place in the district of Muskoka. So I'd be happy to meet with this individual to learn more about the program. I'll get briefed in detail by my ministry and we'll see if, perhaps, we can move forward in a collaborative way to see how we can continue to improve services.

nous avons fait pour contribuer à faire de notre commissaire un officier indépendant de l'Assemblée législative.

Par contre, ce matin, notre commissaire nous a dit, et ce sont ses mots, que le gouvernement a balayé du revers de la main ses recommandations visant les populations précarisées, l'offre active de services en français et le plan des ressources humaines. Non seulement est-ce que ses recommandations ont été complètement ignorées, il nous dit que le gouvernement ne respecte pas la Loi sur les services en français en ne déposant pas de rapport annuel complet sur ses activités.

Ma question est très simple. Pourquoi est-ce que le gouvernement ne respecte ni notre bon commissaire ni la Loi sur les services en français?

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Je suis très fière de faire partie d'un gouvernement qui appuie la francophonie en Ontario. C'est ce gouvernement-ci qui a créé le poste de commissaire aux services en français.

Le commissaire a donné des recommandations au gouvernement. C'est, je crois, son sixième ou septième rapport. Ces recommandations sont toujours prises très sérieusement et nous avons fait beaucoup d'avancées dans la francophonie en Ontario. Les francophones le reconnaissent très bien.

Alors, les recommandations sont toujours revues et mises de l'avant. On étudie les recommandations du commissaire. Ce sont des recommandations. Nous travaillons de très près avec les ministères qui sont impliqués pour s'assurer que les recommandations du commissaire sont prises sérieusement, et nous allons continuer à travailler de très près.

C'est une recommandation du commissaire que l'office fasse un rapport annuel, et nous étudions cette recommandation-là de très près. Merci.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Whitby—Oshawa on a point of order.

Ms. Christine Elliott: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice to restrike the Select Committee on Developmental Services and present its final report.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Whitby—Oshawa is seeking unanimous consent to put a motion without notice. Do we agree? I heard a no.

A point of order from the government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, we very much like this idea. This is an issue that is being discussed with the House leaders—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not a point of order.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question ce matin est pour la ministre déléguée aux services en français. Les néo-démocrates sont très fiers de promouvoir et de défendre les services en français pour les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes. Nous sommes fiers du travail que

DEFERRED VOTES

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on government order number 1, the motion

for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1138 to 1143.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All members take their seats, please. All members take your seat, please. The Sergeant-at-Arms will come for you.

Voting on government order number 1:

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMeekin, Ted
Anderson, Granville	Fraser, John	Meilleur, Madeleine
Baker, Yvan	Gravelle, Michael	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoggarth, Ann	Moridi, Reza
Ballard, Chris	Hoskins, Eric	Murray, Glen R.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hunter, Mitzie	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Bradley, James J.	Jaczek, Helena	Naqvi, Yasir
Chan, Michael	Kiwala, Sophie	Oraziotti, David
Chiarelli, Bob	Kwinter, Monte	Potts, Arthur
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Marie-France	Qaaddi, Shafiq
Coteau, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Rinaldi, Lou
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Sandals, Liz
Damerla, Dipika	Malhi, Harinder	Sergio, Mario
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Delaney, Bob	Martins, Cristina	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dhillon, Vic	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiane
Dickson, Joe	Mauro, Bill	Wong, Soo
Dong, Han	McGarry, Kathryn	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	McMahon, Eleanor	Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gates, Wayne	Miller, Paul
Arnott, Ted	Gélinas, France	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Gretzky, Lisa	Natyshak, Taras
Barrett, Toby	Hardeaman, Ernie	Nicholls, Rick
Bisson, Gilles	Harris, Michael	Sattler, Peggy
Cimino, Joe	Hatfield, Percy	Singh, Jagmeet
Clark, Steve	Horwath, Andrea	Smith, Todd
DiNovo, Cheri	Jones, Sylvia	Tabuns, Peter
Dunlop, Garfield	MacLeod, Lisa	Taylor, Monique
Elliott, Christine	Mantha, Michael	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fedeli, Victor	Martow, Gila	Walker, Bill
Fife, Catherine	McDonell, Jim	Yurek, Jeff
Forster, Cindy	McNaughton, Monte	
French, Jennifer K.	Miller, Norm	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 57; the nays are 40.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be it resolved that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

"To the Honourable David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

"We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session."

There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1148 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Yesterday saw the release of a report by the Environmental Commissioner entitled *Looking for Leadership*. This is a very appropriate title, I believe, because actually everyone in Ontario is now looking to the Liberal government to show leadership on a number of fronts.

The Liberal government continues to make promises they ultimately just can't keep. Unfortunately, there's an evident pattern of behaviour where it is clear they have no intention of following through on their promises, whether they are related to the environment, climate change, gridlock and, most importantly, their efforts on the deficit and debt.

The Environmental Commissioner's report contains worrisome news. Mr. Miller projects that the government will fail to meet greenhouse gas reduction targets for 2020 by upwards of 20%, and these are goals which they set for themselves in 2007. I guess, though, this really shouldn't come as a shock, since the Environmental Commissioner said that "very little has been achieved" because there has been very little action. The commissioner actually went on to say that "in fact, we have gone backwards" with regard to the Liberal efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

This is unacceptable. Speaker, it is time this government finally walks its own talk and starts to meet its own targets instead of assuming Ontario taxpayers can continue to afford all of their bad decisions and failures.

ROSIE SMITH

Ms. Cindy Forster: I rise today to remark on the passing of Rosie Smith, of Welland, who died June 25, at the age of 76.

Born Rosemarie Spagnoletti, Rosie grew up across from the old Welland Canal, where childhood days of summer were spent swimming and helping other kids learn to swim.

By 20, she met and married Steve Smith, who enjoyed swimming and mentoring as much as she did. Together, they spearheaded an Olympic-sized pool at St. George Park and initiated the St. George Aquatic Club, which produced a highly successful competitive swim team.

Rosie and Steve felt very strongly that every kid deserved the chance to have success, and so they made it their mission to ensure money didn't stand in the way. They became masters of discretion to protect the self-esteem of all swimmers.

Rosie spent 40 years volunteering in the Welland Recreation Projects Association. Their premier event is

the Toys for Tots Christmas program for families in need. They also run a series of community events that are free to all each year.

Rosie was an ordinary person who did extraordinary things. It was my sincere pleasure to present her with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for distinguished community service in 2012. She was a mother of two, a grandmother of three, and a school secretary. She had a quick wit, an infectious laugh and the ability to make whoever she was talking to feel they were the most important person on the planet. She lived life with compassion, integrity, drive and humility.

On behalf of the constituents of the Welland riding, I would like to thank Rosie's family—her husband, Steve; her son, Greg; and her daughter, Karen—for sharing her with us. She will be missed, but she will continue to inspire.

TORONTO INTERNATIONAL BRAZILFEST

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Today I want to recognize one of the upcoming and outstanding festivals taking place in my riding of Davenport. In a multicultural city like Toronto, where all summer festivals have something beautiful to offer those who love to meet and learn about new cultures, you cannot miss Canada's largest Brazilian cultural event, the 11th Toronto International BrazilFest.

Many Brazilians today call Canada home, many of whom live in my riding of Davenport. For them, as for many visitors participating and joining in on a yearly basis, BrazilFest has become a real and authentic expression and celebration of Brazilian music, dance, food, crafts and culture. The festival is as much an opportunity for Brazilians to reconnect with their roots as it is to educate us about their culture.

Each year, the festival has grown in size and prestige. Today the festival attracts an estimated public attendance of 30,000 people and is recognized as Canada's largest Brazilian cultural event. Held at EarlsCourt Park, located at St. Clair Avenue West and Caledonia Road, the festival stage will be filled with musicians, dancers and singers who will take you on an exotic trip exploring Brazilian music and celebration without having to leave the heart of Toronto.

On July 20, drop by BrazilFest for your one-stop cultural trip to experience the richness and energy of the Brazilian people through dance, food and festival. BrazilFest is a must-attend event for anyone interested in sharing in the collective heritage and multicultural diversity of our province.

RIDING OF KITCHENER—CONESTOGA

Mr. Michael Harris: I'd like to thank the people of Kitchener—Conestoga for their support in the last election and putting their trust in me to serve as their member of provincial Parliament once again.

My success would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of my committed team of volunteers, who dedicated their time and energy to my re-election campaign. They made countless calls to supporters. They knocked on thousands of doors across the riding. They put up thousands of election signs during the summer heat. They helped out around the office and even on Twitter, and drove hundreds of people to the polls on election day.

So I would like to thank each and every person who served on my campaign and believed in my vision for our community. Over the next four years, I will continue to fight for Kitchener—Conestoga by keeping the government's feet to the fire on the Highway 7 project. I'll work with my regional colleagues to deliver all-day, two-way GO train service to Kitchener-Waterloo. I'll pressure the government to approve the region's solution to improve local ambulance response times through streamlined dispatch. And I'll fight to preserve open tendering in the region of Waterloo so that all qualified local tradespeople retain their right to bid and work on local taxpayer-funded infrastructure.

I know that with your help, we can continue to achieve great things together in the riding of Kitchener—Conestoga. So, thanks once again. I appreciate it.

TOM LAWSON

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Tomorrow, Londoners will gather to celebrate the life of Colonel Tom Lawson, a great friend of London whose loss will be deeply felt by the many citizens whose lives he touched. Colonel Lawson died this week at his home at age 71 after a well-fought battle with cancer.

His roots in the community are deep. Born in London in 1943 to Colonel Tom and Miggsie Lawson, the younger Tom carried on the family tradition of service to others. His grandfather, Ray Lawson, served as Lieutenant Governor of Ontario from 1946 to 1952 and established the Lawson Foundation almost 60 years ago to enrich the quality of life in Canada. Colonel Lawson would go on to become both a vice-president and director of the foundation.

He was a career businessman and successful entrepreneur who volunteered his management expertise to dozens of organizations, most recently the First Nations Financial Management Board. A reservist in his youth, he was passionate about fostering linkages between the Canadian Forces and the community as a life member of the Garrison Community Council and former Legion president. Locally, he served in leadership roles at the London museum of archaeology, the London Rotary club, Lawson Health Research Institute and the London Chamber of Commerce. He was also the former mayor of Grand Bend and a former Lambton county councillor.

I came to know Tom personally through his work with the Lawson Literacy Awards, which were launched by his family in 1978 to encourage creative expression among grades 7 and 8 students in writing about Canadian

topics of significance to them. In my 13 years on the school board, Colonel Lawson never missed an award ceremony. He read each of the winning pieces and personally congratulated each student on their work. His impact on the hundreds of young people who participated in the competition over the years has been profound.

Colonel Lawson will be greatly missed, but his legacy will live on through his enduring contributions to our community. On behalf of all MPPs, I wish to express our sincere condolences to his friends and family.

CAMBRIDGE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I am more than delighted to bring an update about the progress of the long-awaited Cambridge Memorial Hospital expansion and redevelopment project in my riding of Cambridge.

On June 25 I attended the hospital's annual community meeting, and CEO Patrick Gaskin eagerly noted that they are on track to build what is essentially a brand new hospital for the residents of Cambridge and North Dumfries. The design is complete, the construction consortia have been chosen and the project team is preparing to start this fall. Patrick said that now, the staff really do believe that it is moving ahead as the Tim Hortons has already moved to its temporary location for the construction.

A new wing and renovations will provide the needed space for the hospital to bring new and expanded clinical services to our community. There are six areas that will benefit: the emergency department, mental health program, intensive care unit, birthing unit, operating rooms, and in-patient beds.

Thank you to Waterloo region chair Ken Seiling, Cambridge mayor Doug Craig and North Dumfries mayor Rob Deutschmann and their respective councillors, and former Minister of Health and Long-Term Care Deb Matthews, for their ongoing support of this much-anticipated capital redevelopment program. A project like this is part of our government's ongoing plan to build a better health care system and ensure that all Ontarians have more reliable health services in their community.

1310

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Recently, eight provincially funded industrial wind turbines in my riding were ordered to be lowered or removed because they violate height limits near the Chatham-Kent Municipal Airport. This actually would be a very unprecedented move in the province of Ontario. The wind turbine company, GDF SUEZ, was given this order by Transport Canada because airport zoning regulations protect a radius of approximately four kilometres around the airport.

As the critic for community safety and correctional services, I note that the airport zoning regulations are put in place for a reason: to protect public safety. Those who break the laws must be held accountable, with no special treatment.

I've talked to numerous pilots who were concerned for their safety in rough weather conditions, and I'm pleased that their voices have been heard. I'd like to commend Transport Canada's commitment to protecting the safety of pilots and passengers of the Chatham-Kent Municipal Airport.

This issue has left the people of my riding wondering how many of the nearly 500 industrial wind turbines in the Chatham-Kent-Essex area were built too closely to homes or even highways. Ontario does have setback requirements for industrial wind turbines, but what good are these regulations if they are not being followed by companies? The province has put billions of dollars into the operation of these wind turbines and should be able to ensure they are located safely with the approval of host communities.

HUMBER BAY SHORES WATERFRONT FESTIVAL

Mr. Peter Z. Mileczyn: I rise in the House today to speak about a budding and vibrant tradition in my riding of Etobicoke-Lakeshore: the second annual Humber Bay Shores Waterfront Festival.

On this coming Saturday, August 9, in Jean Augustine Park, the constituents of my riding will be able to enjoy live entertainment, enjoy many tasty treats, take in the incredible talent of our local performers and enjoy the gorgeous views of our precious waterfront. This festival promises lots of family fun with our great neighbours from my riding of Etobicoke-Lakeshore and those from beyond.

The Humber Bay Shores Condominium Association is recognized by all levels of government for its dedication to community development and partnership. A strong voice for the 10,000 residents of one of Toronto's fastest-growing neighbourhoods, they are wonderful stewards of this part of our waterfront. They organize community clean-up days, speak up to protect the quality of the air and water of the area, and are partners in helping to determine the future of their neighbourhood. The association has also recently begun to serve the local community by organizing and hosting a local farmers' market, which gives my constituents the opportunity to purchase locally grown produce and baked goods.

I congratulate the Humber Bay Shores Condominium Association and their president, Jim Reekie, on organizing their second annual waterfront festival and for their ongoing dedication to community building and local partnerships with residents, businesses and artists. I look forward to attending and I invite all members of this House to come and visit the beautiful waterfront of Etobicoke-Lakeshore on Saturday, August 9, for what will be a fun and exciting day.

BARRIELICIOUS FESTIVAL

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: From July 4 until July 20, the BarrieLicious Festival allows residents and visitors to our fair city by the bay to try the diversity of culinary

experiences for a fixed-price menu. You can travel to Greece at the Town and Country restaurant and get excellent service from John, Jimmy and Steve, enjoy the Italian experience at Nino's, try Japanese sushi at Akira, relish the British fare at the British Arms, or try Indian dishes at Tara.

Come to Barrie from now until July 20 to globetrot without the expensive cost of airline tickets. Barrie is a gourmet lover's delight, especially during this festival, and penny-pinchers will not only love the food, but the great prices, too.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made in the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mrs. Martow assumes ballot item number 4 and Ms. Thompson assumes ballot item number 77.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CHILD CARE MODERNIZATION ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA MODERNISATION DES SERVICES DE GARDE D'ENFANTS

Mrs. Sandals moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts / *Projet de loi 10, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur la garde d'enfants et la petite enfance, abrogeant la Loi sur les garderies, modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les éducatrices et les éducateurs de la petite enfance, la Loi sur l'éducation et la Loi sur le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités et apportant des modifications corrélatives et connexes à d'autres lois.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Hon. Liz Sandals: This is essentially reintroducing the Child Care Modernization Act, which was introduced and began debate last session.

We're taking steps to strengthen oversight of the province's unlicensed child care sector while increasing access to licensed child care options for families.

The Child Care Modernization Act would, if passed, help transform the child care and early years system to better meet the needs of both the parents who use and rely on the system and the children who are placed in its care.

We believe families must have access to safe, modern child care, and that is part of our plan to invest in giving our children the best possible start in life.

RADON AWARENESS AND PREVENTION ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION AU RADON ET LA PROTECTION CONTRE L'INFILTRATION DE CE GAZ

Mr. Qaadri moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 11, An Act to raise awareness about radon, provide for the Ontario Radon Registry and reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces / *Projet de loi 11, Loi visant à sensibiliser le public au radon, à prévoir la création du Registre des concentrations de radon en Ontario et à réduire la concentration de ce gaz dans les logements et les lieux de travail.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Radon and this bill, hopefully together, will be publicized for Ontarians—an important cause of cancer; to this day, unfortunately, unrecognized and underaddressed. Hopefully, this will address that.

1320

PETITIONS

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly.

"Whereas it is absolutely crucial that more is done to provide Ontarians retirement financial security which they can rely on;

"Whereas the federal government has refused to partner with our government to ensure that Ontarians have a secure retirement plan;

"Whereas more than three million Ontarians rely on the Canada Pension Plan alone, that currently does not provide enough to support an adequate standard of living;

"Whereas the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will provide the safe and stable retirement that Ontarians need;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario Legislative Assembly support a plan to move forward with an Ontario-made pension retirement plan that will provide a financially secure retirement for Ontarians."

I fully support the petition, and I will give the petition to page Matthew.

CREDIT UNIONS

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a number of petitions from the Parry Sound area, to do with credit unions. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario's economy and create jobs in three ways:

"—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

"—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

"—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries."

Speaker, I support this petition and will sign it.

CHILDHOOD APRAXIA OF SPEECH

Mr. Mike Colle: I have a petition here that was compiled by Lisa and David Brennan in Mississauga. They did it for their son Matthew.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas childhood apraxia of speech is a rare neurological speech disorder that affects oral motor planning;

"Whereas an estimated 3% to 5% of the world's childhood population are diagnosed with childhood apraxia of speech;

"Whereas Ontario has excellent speech-language centres and programs that currently provide treatment for childhood apraxia of speech;

"Whereas children diagnosed in Canada with childhood apraxia of speech are eligible to receive the children's disability tax credit to assist with therapy costs;

"Whereas greater public awareness of speech disorders and the benefits of early intervention speech-language therapy are needed in the province of Ontario;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to join the United States of America in declaring May 14 as Apraxia Awareness Day" in Ontario.

I fully support this petition by David and Lisa Brennan, and I affix my name to it.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Health Canada has approved the use of Esbriet for patients with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF), a rare, progressive and fatal disease characterized by scarring of the lungs; and

"Whereas Esbriet, the first and only approved medication in Canada for the treatment of IPF, has been shown to slow disease progression and to decrease the decline in lung function; and

"Whereas the lack of public funding for Esbriet is especially devastating for seniors with IPF who rely exclusively on the provincial drug program for access to medications;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately provide Esbriet as a choice to patients with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis and their health care providers in Ontario through public funding."

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this petition, and I affix my name to it.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is absolutely crucial that more is done to provide Ontarians retirement financial security which they can rely on;

"Whereas the federal government has refused to partner with our government to ensure that Ontarians have a secure retirement plan;

"Whereas more than three million Ontarians rely on the Canada Pension Plan alone, that currently does not provide enough to support an adequate standard of living;

"Whereas the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will provide the safe and stable retirement that Ontarians need;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario Legislative Assembly support a plan to move forward with an Ontario-made pension retirement plan that will provide a financially secure retirement for Ontarians."

I support this petition and I affix my signature to it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Barrie.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Davenport—the fabulous riding of Davenport.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Davenport; I knew it was one word.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Mrs. Cristina Martins: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is absolutely crucial that more is done to provide Ontarians retirement financial security which they can rely on;

"Whereas the federal government has refused to partner with our government to ensure that Ontarians have a secure retirement plan;

"Whereas more than three million Ontarians rely on the Canada Pension Plan alone, that currently does not provide enough to support an adequate standard of living;

"Whereas the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will provide the safe and stable retirement that Ontarians need;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario Legislative Assembly support a plan to move forward with an Ontario-made pension retirement plan that will provide a financially secure retirement for Ontarians."

I agree with this petition, will now sign it and give it to page Ethan.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Scarborough residents north of Ontario Highway 401 and east of Don Mills are without a rapid transit option; and

"Whereas a strong transit system is critical for increasing economic development and tackling income disparity; and

"Whereas this geographical area continues to grow and the demand for strong rapid transit continues to increase; and

"Whereas Sheppard Avenue is a major artery for automobile traffic for commuters travelling from suburbs to downtown Toronto, and travelling from suburb to suburb; and

"Whereas ground-level rapid transit would increase traffic, restrict lanes for automobiles, and add further risk for pedestrians and commuters at dangerous intersections along Sheppard Avenue; and

"Whereas demands for underground rapid transit along Sheppard Avenue have been part of public discourse for over 50 years; and

"Whereas the province of Ontario previously approved a plan from the city of Toronto to extend the Sheppard subway line from Downsview to Scarborough Centre; and

"Whereas an extension to the Sheppard subway line will require contributions and co-operation from the city of Toronto, the province of Ontario and the government of Canada;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To support the extension of the Sheppard subway line east to Scarborough Centre; and

"To call upon the government of Canada to contribute multi-year funding for the construction and operation of an extension to the Sheppard subway line."

I fully support the petition and give it to page Ethan.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated Tuesday, July 8, 2014, this House stands adjourned until Monday, July 14, 2014, at 10:30 a.m. sharp.

The House adjourned at 1328.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Samia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Cimino, Joe (NDP)	Sudbury	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonnell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengary	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton–Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakubski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

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Monday 14 July 2014

Lundi 14 juillet 2014



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 14 July 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 14 juillet 2014

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the member from Nepean—Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure to rise in the House today to do something that it occurred to me I should do on Saturday with the opening of the Strandherd-Armstrong Bridge, which is something I worked very hard on for the past eight years. The government made a sincere effort to engage me in that event, and I wanted to sincerely thank my colleague the government House leader as well as my colleague from Ottawa South for not only including me but also for recognizing the work I did on that project. I may say to the members opposite that if they continue to do that, I think the tone of this Legislature will be something that would make all Ontarians proud.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm guessing that's somewhere between a point of order and a member's statement. I'm not 100% sure. It's Monday; I'm patient.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Grant Crack: It's a pleasure for me to welcome my brother Michael, sister-in-law Lisa and nieces Dana, Ella and Georgia to the Legislature today. They're from Ottawa—Orléans, the great riding of Marie-France Lalonde. Welcome.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I would like the House to join me in welcoming Mr. Wilf Arndt from Waterdown. Wilf is the executive director of the business improvement area in Waterdown and the founder of probably Ontario's newest farmers' market. Welcome, Wilf.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I'd like to welcome a guest of mine from the islands of Trinidad and Tobago. She's visiting us here in the Legislature to witness our proceedings. She's in the east members' gallery. Her name is Fernella McCarthy, and she's accompanied by my wife, Tahay Balkissoon. I'm pleased to have them here.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Good morning. We'd like to welcome page Brendan Sheppard's father, Andrew Sheppard, who is in the public gallery this morning. Welcome, Andrew.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Good morning. We're pleased to welcome the family of our page Ashley Bowes from Oshawa. Welcome to her mother, Katherine, and father, Scott, Amber, Ilah, and family friends, as well:

Andrew, Keira and Charisma. They will be in the public gallery this morning.

ANNUAL REPORT, FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table the 2013-14 annual report from the French Language Services Commissioner.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Jim Wilson: Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Premier, this last Friday's job numbers provide more proof that your failed economic policies are toxic for Ontario families. Statistics Canada told us that almost 34,000 Ontarians lost their jobs last month alone, bumping up the unemployment rate to 7.5%. That's 34,000 more people who are struggling to feed their families in an Ontario that continues to fall further and further behind the rest of Canada.

Your budget will be more of the same policies that landed us in this mess in the first place. It will continue to hurt Ontarians who are losing their livelihoods as a result. Premier, why do you refuse to accept the reality that your failed economic policies continue to hurt Ontario families?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, there's no doubt that after two strong months of job growth it's disappointing that this last month's job numbers were not as good as we would have wanted, and I think that's the case in other parts of the country as well. But, Mr. Speaker, that does not negate the fact that what we know is needed right now is investment and support for our economy.

We do not need what the Leader of the Opposition and his party were proposing, which is to cut and slash and to actually slow the economic recovery. We know that investments in infrastructure and support for and partnership with business are what we need to do, and that is the plan that we have proposed to the people of Ontario. That's the budget that we will be reintroducing today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Again to the Premier: Today's budget won't be a surprise to anyone, including the rating agencies, who have given dire warnings about the short- and long-term impacts of this budget. A 1% increase in borrowing costs could add as much as \$3 billion in annual interest payments, yet the man in charge of the

government's coffers assured the press gallery that the "bankers aren't freaking."

Premier, your finance minister won't be so laid-back when the bankers call you, as they did Bob Rae—and I remember it very well—to tell you that Ontario's line of credit has been cut off and that they're not going to lend you any more money. Do you appreciate that this is the reality you will face if you proceed with this budget, that one day Ontario's credit is going to get cut off or get awfully more expensive for Ontario?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: While the Leader of the Opposition continues in their pattern of talking down Ontario rather than building the province up, we will be reintroducing the budget that we brought to the people of Ontario, and that budget, that plan, invests in the people of Ontario. It invests in the infrastructure of the province, Mr. Speaker, in communities across the province. It invests in the talent and the skills of the people of the province. We know that we have to be the best-educated and best-trained workforce in the world.

Our plan makes sure that people will have retirement security, so in having an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan in the absence of a federal partner, we are taking leadership, we are stepping up, and we will put that retirement pension plan in place.

The Leader of the Opposition is correct: We are introducing the same plan that we ran on. We are reintroducing the budget, which is exactly what we said we were going to do.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward—Hastings, come to order.

Carry on, please.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Agriculture, come to order.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Back to the Premier: Premier, I remember very well when Wall Street bankers called Floyd Laughren and Bob Rae and said, "We're not going to lend you any more money." It led to the breaking of collective agreements right across the public sector and the chaos created by the social contract.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Rae days.

Mr. Jim Wilson: And the Rae days that many people remember.

You're ignoring the financial experts. You're moving ahead with the same failed economic plan. Some 34,000 families on Friday can't possibly agree with your plan. The unemployment among youth is the highest it has been in my 24 years in this House. And yet for 11 years, you just keep plowing ahead with the same failed economic policies.

1040

Premier, you need to change course. You can't ignore the lenders because they're either going to cut you off

some day or make money very, very expensive for the government to borrow. That will take billions of dollars out of front-line services and hurt services that we count on, like health care and education. Why do you persist on this failed path?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, I would just note to the member opposite that in the two months prior to these job numbers, the job numbers were up in Ontario; in fact, more jobs have been created. The fact is that overall we have recovered more than 460,000 jobs since the economic downturn.

Yes, I am disappointed that last month's job numbers were not what we would want them to be, but that's exactly why the plan we're bringing forward and the strategy we ran on and that we will reintroduce today in the form of our budget is the one that is needed to make sure that we invest in infrastructure, that we invest in the talent and skills of this province—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —that we have partnerships and supports like the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund, the Eastern Ontario Development Fund and the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, those supports that allow partnership with business, that allow businesses to expand and allow jobs to be created. That's how we know this is the right plan for the people of Ontario.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good morning, Speaker. Good morning, Premier. My question is for the Premier. Ontario lost 34,000 jobs last month, bumping our unemployment rate up to 7.5%. Let's talk about that. That is the 90th consecutive month that Ontario's unemployment was higher than the national average. That's seven and a half years, Premier—not a very proud record, yet your budget raises taxes and somehow still increases the deficit. Your budget also shows interest costs growing by \$1 billion every year.

Can you please tell us how higher taxes and higher interest payments are creating jobs in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: As the Premier said, while the job numbers in June weren't exactly what we would have liked, the fact of the matter is, when you look at the overall trend, those numbers fluctuate month to month very significantly. There have been 460,000 net new jobs created since the recession. We're up 172% in jobs since the recession.

Ontarians recognized that our job plan was the way to go in the June election when they soundly rejected the PC approach. They rejected the PC plan to fire 100,000 workers and supported our plan to instead invest in education, invest in training, invest in infrastructure. They supported our plan to create jobs with partnerships through businesses, which are creating over 50,000 jobs

through our regional economic development funds and our partnerships. They rejected the PC approach to cancel those programs.

We're on the right track, and this budget's going to ensure that we continue—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Premier, it's almost incomprehensible that you will not heed the warnings of the rating agencies. Moody's has warned you twice now, first on May 2 and again last week. Then BlackRock has also sent a shot across your bow: Change your deficit financing strategy or be prepared to pay more. Portfolio Management's Norman Levine told you to be ready for multiple downgrades simply because you show no plans to change your ways.

Premier, when you use tax dollars to pay interest, that's money that you continue to take away from front-line services, like health and education. You've already cut physiotherapy services for seniors. You've already cut cataract surgeries. You've already cut diabetes testing strips. Premier, what will you cut next to pay for the extra \$1 billion you're spending on interest next year?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before I go to the minister, I'm going to ask that the whistling stop.

Carry on.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The election's over. The people of Ontario have spoken. Enough of the negative rhetoric. Enough of the tearing down of the efforts of Ontario businesses to build up our economy. The fact is, Ontario's economy is in full recovery. The fact is, Ontario has now created 460,000 net new jobs. The fact is, we're up 172% from the recessionary low.

Ontarians supported our plan, for instance, to partner with the auto sector to support 500,000 jobs; they rejected their plan, Mr. Speaker, to abandon the auto sector. They supported our plan to invest in our people, to invest in infrastructure and to invest in building a positive climate for investment in Ontario's economy, a plan that has made us number one in North America for foreign direct investment.

It's time for the PCs to demonstrate that they learned something from the people of Ontario. It's time for the PCs to support the budget—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Be seated, please.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: You call it negative rhetoric; Moody's calls it a negative rating.

Premier, we're at a real crossroads in Ontario. In the last 10 years, you've doubled our debt, you've relied on borrowed money to pay our bills and you've tripled our hydro rates, so much so that companies have left Ontario for cheaper hydro. That sent 300,000 manufacturing jobs packing. These are undeniable facts.

The budget does absolutely nothing to address the skyrocketing price of hydro. Companies are waiting.

They're looking for leadership. Your announcement that hydro rates are going up by 42% is not what they want to hear. We already have the highest hydro rates in North America.

People want to see something different in this budget that will restore affordable hydro rates. Premier, will you deliver that to them?

Hon. Brad Duguid: My goodness, Mr. Speaker, the opposition are just so negative. They seem to get off on talking down Ontario's economy.

There's still more work to do, and in this budget we want to ensure that we continue to work with our business community. The fact is, as I said, we're up 460,000 net new jobs. The fact is, we're number one in North America for foreign direct investment. We're also the number one mining financial centre in the world. Our auto sector, our information and communication technologies sector and our financial services sector are among the top two in North America. We're in the top three in life sciences—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Brad Duguid: We're in the top three in so many different sectors in our economy in North America.

Ontario has rejected your negative approach in the last election, so stop talking down Ontario's economy, show them that you learned something and support the budget that we're moving forward with today.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Some 34,000 people lost their jobs in Ontario last month alone. The Premier keeps telling people that the budget is progressive, but it's a Trojan Horse plan, and there's a big hole where there should be a jobs plan.

When the Premier reintroduces her budget, will it do anything to reverse failed Liberal policies of corporate handouts, and instead put in place a real, targeted plan to create jobs instead of killing jobs?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: This is the same question that has just been answered twice, coming now from the NDP, which is somewhat surprising.

What I will say to the leader of the third party, as I said to the leader of the Conservatives, is that we are obviously not happy when, out of three months, in one month the job numbers are down, but the fact is that we have recovered more than 460,000 net new jobs since the economic downturn.

Now, that doesn't mean that that's even across the province. It doesn't mean that there aren't pockets of this province where there is obviously more work to do, and we acknowledge that. We understand that there are certain parts of this province that were hit harder than others, and that's why it's very important that we have targeted responses and work with regions of the province to make sure that there are economic development plans in place that are suited to that region, but that kind of work involves building up those regions, investing in them and working with them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I want to talk about another hole in the budget plan for the province. The Premier insists that her budget includes a plan for transit, but it has holes in it so big that you could drive an imaginary bullet train through them. There are holes where you would expect to find, for example, a downtown relief line, and holes where you would expect to find a plan for clean electric trains or a real plan for two-way, all-day GO in this province.

Is the Premier going to deal with these holes, Speaker, or will Liberals have people waiting at the station yet again?

1050

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, I just want to be clear with the leader of the third party that what she is talking about—a plan for transit—is actually what is in our budget, Mr. Speaker. It is in our plan. We actually have a plan for the things that she is talking about. Whether it is the downtown relief line, which is part of the Big Move, or whether it's electrification of the GO lines so that we can have full-day, two-way service, those are actually part of our plan. They actually weren't part of the NDP's plan, but they are part of our plan.

That's the budget that we are reintroducing, Mr. Speaker, because we said we were going to do it. We are doing that today. If we can get the budget passed in the Legislature, we want to move to implement it because those things that the leader of the third party is talking about are part of our plan, and we want to make sure they get implemented.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, families across Ontario are watching their bills go up, and as people turn on the air conditioning to deal with the rising temperatures, they're watching their bills go through the ceiling. For 10 years, bills have been going up, but instead of a plan that gets rates under control, there's another big hole in the budget.

Are people who are paying their bills going to get déjà vu all over again and see their rates go up by 42% under this government?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just talk a little bit about what is in our plan, Mr. Speaker, because I don't know whether the leader of the third party quite understands that the budget that we are introducing today is the same budget that we introduced at the beginning of May.

Interjection.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek says that it was shot down. Here's what the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek and his colleagues shot down: \$4.2 billion in school retrofits and builds; a made-in-Ontario pension plan; increasing the Ontario Child Benefit; increasing social assistance benefits; \$810 million to support adults with developmental disabilities; expansion of low-income health benefits; \$20 million for expanding the student nutrition program; and \$42 million to prevent and reduce homelessness. Those are all in our budget.

The NDP is not supporting any of those, Mr. Speaker, unless, by this afternoon, they have a change of heart and support our budget.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please.

Be seated, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Agriculture will come to order—second time.

New question.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, my next question is for the Premier. Although she loves to reel off her little list, this Trojan Horse budget is filled with all kinds of other surprises that she doesn't like to talk about much, like the fact that the Liberals are planning to have a fire sale of public assets, things like the LCBO and our hydro companies, even while they bail out American real estate companies.

It's astonishing that the Liberals are planning to sell the LCBO when even Mike Harris said it was too valuable to sell. Does the Premier really think it's a good idea to burn the furniture to heat the house?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, again, the leader of the third party is making it up, as she did during the election campaign. She's making it up. The fact is, there have been investments in assets in this province for decades, and assets need to work for the people of the province.

What we have done is, we have asked Ed Clark, who is CEO of Toronto-Dominion Bank, to work with a team and to make sure that the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario are working to the maximum benefit of the people of Ontario because we want to make sure that we have those dollars to reinvest, to invest in the infrastructure and the assets that we know we need for the future.

If the leader of the third party doesn't think that's a good idea, then I think she should be clear, because I think investment in the assets that we need today is a responsible thing to do for the people of the province, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the Liberals claim that auto insurance bills are coming down, but by talking about approved rates, they're not talking about the rates that drivers are actually paying. Drivers get a surprise every time they open the bill from their auto insurance company because they're not seeing any savings at all. Drivers know the real story, whether the Liberals coat it with shiny red paint or not.

When the Premier introduces her budget this afternoon, will drivers see real savings, or will it be more of the same Liberal spin without any real relief for the people who are paying the bills?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What I hear the leader of the third party doing is going through a list of somewhat

connected but disjointed questions—again, the kind of platform she had, where things aren't necessarily connected—looking for a rationalization not to support the budget, because there is so much in this budget that is good for the people of the province. The leader of the third party talked about a little list; it's actually a long list of things that are in the best interest of the people of the province.

On the issue of auto insurance, the leader of the third party knows full well that, on average, auto insurance rates are down 4.6%. We are on track to make sure that those auto insurance rates come down by 15%.

She knows that, but she's throwing up this rhetoric in order to justify not supporting the budget, not supporting wage increases for personal support workers, not supporting new funding for long-term-care homes, not supporting an expanded mental health and addictions strategy and not supporting a comprehensive action plan for—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: New Democrats know exactly where we stand, and we know that this Liberal plan is full of holes, and it is full of surprises. It's a plan to sell off public assets, but it bails out—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Continue.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's a plan to sell off public assets but bails out American real estate speculators. It makes life more expensive for people but hands more no-strings-attached giveaways to corporations. And the jobs plan is the same jobs plan that led to Ontarians losing 34,000 jobs last month and has led to employment in manufacturing hitting its lowest point in this province since 1976—not good work from the Liberals.

Does the Premier agree that her budget plan is a Trojan Horse plan for Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Believe it or not, a lot has changed in Ontario since 1976, so it's very important that the government in 2014 have a plan that's relevant to 2014, not to 1976. That means that it's necessary to invest in advanced manufacturing. It's necessary to partner with businesses so that they can expand and so that they can keep up globally.

Ontario has recovered more than 460,000 net new jobs. We have a plan that will continue to invest in the businesses in this province, support the businesses in this province and support the people in this province who need training that is going to allow them to be globally competitive—and make sure that we have an international trade strategy that finds new markets.

It's 2014. We're introducing a budget that's good for Ontario in 2014.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is also to the Premier of Ontario. On Friday, we learned that Ontario

lost 34,000 jobs. That's equivalent to the town of St. Thomas, just for your information.

The government's strategy of job reduction, high taxes, high hydro bills and the high cost of government is compromising the livelihood of tens of thousands of Ontarians. Today, when the Liberals retable their May budget, Ontario is expected to see a credit downgrade. That will cause further job losses in the province of Ontario.

Two specific policies come to mind. The Ontario pension plan and the aviation fuel tax could cost Ontario massive job losses, according to the CFIB and Air Canada.

Does the Premier really think that losing not just thousands of jobs but tens of thousands of jobs is progressive?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Let's talk about tens of thousands of jobs. Let's talk about the 50,000 jobs that have been created in this province from the partnerships that we've engaged in through our regional economic development funds, an approach supported by the people of Ontario in the last election, and your approach to cancel those programs was rejected.

1100

Let's talk about the 500,000 jobs, direct and indirect, in our auto sector. We're going to continue to partner with our auto sector. Our Jobs and Prosperity Fund, which is part of this budget, will have spent \$2.5 billion over 10 years to continue those partnerships. You opposed those funds, and the people of Ontario rejected your approach and supported ours.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to keep investing in this province. We're going to continue to keep partnering with our business community. We're going to continue to keep—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: That rhetoric was all well and good for an election campaign, but as John Maynard Keynes once said, "When the facts change, I change my mind." Well, the facts did change with a credit downgrade on the outlook for this province as a result of this budget.

The government needs to understand: Fewer jobs mean there are fewer people paying taxes for our schools, our hospitals and our infrastructure. That means the Liberals will have to either raise taxes, cut services or do both, all while giving our sovereignty over to credit rating agencies in New York and elsewhere in the world.

The government needs to be honest with Ontarians right now. This is not the activist centre; this is an activist failure. On top of the 34,000 jobs we lost last month, will the Premier admit she is on track to losing tens of thousands more jobs as a result of this 2014 budget?

Hon. Brad Duguid: As we've said, last month was not the best month for job creation in the province of Ontario. But if you look at the overall picture and the trends, we're up 460,000 net new jobs since the reces-

sion. That's the fact, Mr. Speaker. We're headed in the right direction.

But I want to ask the member to think about this: How would it have looked last month if our numbers came in 100,000 less because of your plan to fire 100,000 people in this province? The people of Ontario chose well in the last election. They chose an economic plan that's having results, that's going to continue to build a strong economy. They rejected your plan to lay off 100,000 people. It's time for you to learn something from that. It's time for you to support our budget to invest in infrastructure, to invest in partnerships, to keep building on the economic success that we've had to date.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question was for the Minister of Finance, but I'll direct it to the Premier. Last week at the Empire Club, in a discussion about Ontario's finances to a group of assembled civil servants, your Minister of Finance said, "Come on, guys, take those happy pills." In other words, he doesn't think that Ontario's economy is that bad. But the reality is that bad.

Ontario's unemployment rate is now up to 7.5%. It's much higher for youth in the province of Ontario. Good-paying manufacturing jobs are at their lowest point since 1976, and according to the latest jobs numbers, we are down 34,000 jobs.

Would the Premier ask those recently-laid-off people in this province, the good people of this province, to just take some of those happy pills?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Economic Development will want to speak to the supplementary, but I just want to say that the fact is that we, along with other jurisdictions, are still recovering. There is no doubt that the economic downturn hit Ontario very hard. We have a diversified economy, but the manufacturing sector in this economy was hit very hard by the economic downturn—and we're going through a transition. As I said to the leader of the third party, it's not 1976, when there was a different kind of traditional manufacturing in this province. Manufacturing is developing and advanced manufacturing is necessary—it's necessary for those investments to be made in order for companies to be able to compete globally. That's why what we're proposing in our budget is so important: that we make those investments, that we partner with business and that we have an economic strategy that works for all regions of the province.

I hope that the member opposite will find her way clear—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: To the Premier: We are not recovering because you keep doing the same thing over and over again, and then we get the same results.

Ontario has been above the national unemployment rate since 2007. That's under Liberal governments that include much of the current cabinet on that side of the

House. The loss of tens of thousands of good-paying jobs in the province of Ontario is not a time to make flippant remarks. Your government's plan to create jobs in Ontario isn't working and it hasn't been working for a long, long time.

Will the Premier tell the people of Ontario in concrete terms why they should believe anything will be different under this government when there apparently hasn't been a plan since 2007? And will someone on that side of the House please apologize to the people of this province for saying that they should just take some happy pills when they can't get a job in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I would say to the member opposite, show a little faith in the judgment of the people of Ontario. The people of Ontario chose, in June, to support an economic plan that has created 460,000 net new jobs since the recession. They rejected your plan to put in place a silly little job creation tax credit that would have given businesses money for creating jobs they would have created in the first place.

They also rejected your plan to jack up corporate tax rates—that wouldn't have helped our economy; it would have hurt our economy—and they supported our plan to continue to partner with businesses, something you called corporate welfare.

Show a little faith in the people of Ontario. Show that you've learned from some of the things that they told you in this election. Support the budget that we're providing today to keep building a strong economy, create jobs and invest in infrastructure.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Each summer, as students finish classes and final exams at post-secondary institutions across the province, they struggle to find summer employment. My 20-year-old son has many friends who have just finished first- or second-year college or university. Employment during the summer months is important to these youths, not just to save money for the school year, but also to gain valuable work experience that will help them to find that job or career after they graduate.

It's our responsibility, as a government, to ensure that our young people have meaningful opportunities for success. Now that we're a few months into the summer, can the minister tell us what the government has done to ensure access to jobs for our young people this summer?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member from Cambridge, and also, I want to congratulate her on her election. I'm pretty sure that she will make an excellent MPP for her riding and also be a powerful voice for her constituents.

Mr. Speaker, through my ministry's summer jobs services, students have been able to search for jobs through my ministry's employment network. Also, they

can get help with their résumés, and they can apply for funding to start up their own summer companies.

We are also offering a \$2-per-hour hiring incentive to employers to hire students during the summertime. Our government, this year, has invested \$29 million to connect students with job opportunities across the province. This summer, our program will help 30,000 students to find jobs.

Mr. Speaker, helping our young people and students to succeed is of prime importance for our government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you, Minister, for informing the members of the House about what our government is doing to help young people find meaningful jobs this summer. I'm glad our government has committed to providing great opportunities such as these. My 20-year-old son is currently employed by just such a program.

Summer is a great time for our youth to experience something outside of their comfort zone. Whether this is by doing jobs that allow them to work outdoors or by bringing them out of urban areas and into Ontario's northern and rural communities, summer is about new experiences. For example, my son trained to become a fire ranger. He got a job this summer with the Ministry of Natural Resources near Timmins. Last week, he went to fight a forest fire by helicopter. He has learned new skills that were definitely not in his comfort zone a few months ago.

Speaker, can the minister share with the members of this House how our government helps to provide youth with jobs in Ontario's outdoors?

Hon. Reza Moridi: Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member for the question, and let me offer my congratulations, as well, to the member on her election. I've got a number of former Thunder Bay folks who are living in that riding who are thrilled by her election.

Speaker, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry has a long history of offering young people their first jobs in parks, in science and research, and in offices across the province. In fact, MNR is the largest employer of youth in the Ontario public service. This particular summer we'll be offering over 1,900 jobs to youth—employment in the MNR right across the province.

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These jobs will be in a wide variety of different sectors. For example, they might work on a project to create habitat for species at risk, help monitor the health of the forests or assist with community environmental events. Those in the Stewardship Youth Ranger Program will work on natural resource management projects in their own communities.

Speaker, I'm thrilled with the role that the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry continues to play in offering summer employment opportunities for youth right across the province of Ontario.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Premier. Last week, you stated that you were "extremely interested in the work of the select committee. In fact, this is an issue that a number of us on all sides of the House have been concerned about for some time." However, when I asked for unanimous consent for the committee to be re-struck so it could table its report, you and your government turned it down.

With a promise of \$810 million for developmental services that's going to be tabled in this afternoon's budget, the recommendations of the report could go a long way to making sure that you get good value for money. Instead, you are choosing to throw money at a broken system.

Premier, will you commit to re-striking the select committee so it can file its final report and deliver the supports and services that individuals and families across Ontario so desperately need and deserve?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the government House leader will want to speak to the specifics of this issue. But the member opposite knows full well that the release of the report and the findings of the committee—that whole discussion is part of the House leaders' discussion. There is a negotiation going on right now about how the business of the House will be done over the next couple of weeks. The member opposite knows that.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to negotiate some quiet.

Please finish.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: She also knows that the \$810 million that we have in our budget for people with developmental disabilities is necessary money. She knows that there are wait-lists and that there are programs that people cannot get access to because there isn't enough money in the system.

I understand that there need to be changes, but I also understand that there needs to be investment, and that \$810 million is needed in the system, Mr. Speaker, so we need that budget to pass.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Christine Elliott: Mr. Speaker, I'm anticipating what the House leader is about to say; he's going to say it's all caught up with the work of the House and what's going on. There's a very big difference between the work of the standing committee and the work of the select committee. That is a truly non-partisan thing, and I think it's really shameful that you're hiding behind that in order to block what's going on with this select committee.

Premier, \$810 million is a lot of money. We need to make sure that it's being spent properly, yet you don't even want to hear the report of the select committee. I don't understand why, and thousands of individuals and families across Ontario don't understand either. It's a simple thing to do. Why won't you just say yes? Allow the select committee to do its work, reconstitute the com-

mittee so it can file its report, and then listen to its recommendations. People are counting on you to do the right thing, Premier.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I thank the member for Whitby–Oshawa for her important question. I appreciate the work that she has done on this very important issue, along with other members of the committee from all three parties on this very important issue.

As the Premier has said, in the budget today we are going to be committing about \$810 million for our developmental disabilities sector, an initiative which I very much hope the opposition parties will support. That's why, Speaker, the conversations that the House leaders are having right now in terms of constituting committees are very important: because that also involves the select committee so that the work that she refers to gets done.

As to the member for Whitby–Oshawa, if her House leader agrees to the kinds of conversations we are having this afternoon, we can have that committee established. But we all have to work on reconstituting committees as a whole, as has always been the tradition in the House, and we're working hard towards achieving that goal.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. The people of Windsor have been clear: We need a new hospital to serve our families. Today planning is under way to select a site, draw up master plans and determine future uses for existing facilities. But our community is worried about the government's commitment to deliver a new Windsor hospital on time.

Speaker, will the minister commit to delivering funding for the new Windsor hospital, or is he planning to delay a project that our community desperately needs?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. It gives me the opportunity to indicate what we have done in terms of the planning process already under way for the potential future needs of the Windsor area.

We've invested \$2.5 million towards the preliminary planning process to develop the scope and governance, which are important aspects of this process, for a proposed new acute care hospital in Windsor.

I want to say that Windsor Regional Hospital as well as Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare and community partners are all currently working together with the Erie St. Clair LHIN and developing that important stage 1 proposal.

Planning our health care future is a collaborative process. We're very eager to hear that important feedback from the Windsor community.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Health care austerity continues under this government's Trojan Horse budget. Three

straight years of frozen budgets mean hospitals are sending more services to private clinics and charging patients more for parking and other user fees.

The people of Windsor need a firm commitment from this government that a new hospital will be fully supported by the provincial government and delivered without any delay. Speaker, will the minister tell us how much funding this government will provide to deliver the Windsor hospital on time?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I think the member opposite would agree that we shouldn't make decisions without having that important community input, and that's precisely what this planning proposal is set up to do.

I would offer to the member opposite, if she's interested in actually learning more of the details, to have my ministry provide her with a full briefing so that she is up to speed on precisely what our plan is, and the action. I hope you take me up on that offer for a briefing from the ministry.

But in terms of her comment about austerity, the truth is absolutely the opposite, and particularly for Windsor: 93 more doctors, as of 2012, compared to 2003. The Erie St. Clair LHIN now has 588 more nurses than they had in 2005. And of course, as she knows well, the Chatham–Kent health link—as I would hope she knows well—is providing this amazing coordinated care to the area's most complex patients.

Those are just a few examples of how we're investing in Windsor health care.

SPECIAL-NEEDS CHILDREN

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: My question today is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Minister, we know that life can be challenging for children with communication, developmental and physical disabilities. It can also be very difficult for the families involved.

In my riding of Barrie, I have met with and heard from families that are facing these challenges. I am always impressed by their constant strength and unrelenting commitment to support and advocate for their children.

I have heard from many Barrie families, including those of the children attending the ASD class in my school, about the difficulties they face getting special-needs services for their children.

My question, Mr. Speaker: Can the minister please inform this House about what our government is doing to address the concerns and challenges that these families face when trying to access special-needs services?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: First, I want to congratulate our new member from Barrie on her successful election to this Legislature.

I'd also like to thank the Premier for asking me to take on this very important role. Thank you, Premier.

Speaker, as you know, when I was the parliamentary assistant for the Minister of Children and Youth Services, I undertook an engagement to explore ways to improve programs and services for children with special needs. I met with families, researchers and service providers in

cities all across Ontario to discuss how our government can improve access to and support for services we offer families and children with special needs.

I heard from families that navigating the system is indeed difficult, stressful and tiring. I heard that rehabilitation services are often inconsistent. These findings form the basis of my report, which, along with advice from leading experts, went on to inform our new strategy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I would like to thank the minister for her answer. I commend her for all of her efforts when it comes to reaching out to families and experts to improve the services our government offers. I know that that experience will serve her well in her new role as the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

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Minister, the concerns you heard during those engagement sessions are similar to the concerns I've heard in my riding of Barrie. You mentioned that your report formed the basis for our government's new Special Needs Strategy.

My question to the minister is this: Could she please inform this House of the details of the new strategy and how it improves services for children and their families?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Indeed, I did hear from families that navigating the system can be a very challenging process. That's why we will be hiring service coordinators to make planning for child care easier, and easier for their families.

I also heard from experts that early intervention is so important. That's why, as part of our strategy, we will introduce a new pre-school development screen that will connect children and families to the services they need sooner.

I also heard that access to rehabilitation services is very inconsistent as children move through the system. That's why we're integrating the delivery of these services by making access seamless from birth through to the school years.

By implementing this strategy, our government is ensuring that children and youth throughout Ontario can reach their full potential.

TAXATION

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Premier. Premier, earlier this year, you said you were going to take middle-class tax hikes off the table. But then, just weeks later, you turned around and slipped an excessive new tax hike into your budget which will be imposed on all passenger and cargo flights. Once this tax is in effect, the cost of goods will rise and Ontario flights will become the most expensive in Canada.

Premier, do you still think your aviation fuel tax won't affect the middle class, or are you just hoping Ontarians miss what you're really up to?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Yes, this is part of the budget that we'll be tabling later today. The fact of the matter is,

we're going to build public transit in this province. We're going to invest \$29 billion over the next number of years to do that, and it does require some revenue tools. At least we've laid out where the revenues are going to come from and it's very clearly in the budget. Yes, it is challenging and it will be challenging for the sector, but we need those revenues to invest in building public transit, unlike your approach, which was to find those revenues by laying off 100,000 public servants. That's where your savings were going to come from.

We do have revenue tools. They are part of the budget. It's never easy, and I don't expect any sectors that are impacted by those revenue tools to be pleased with that. At the same time, it's in the interest of ensuring that we build public transit in this province that we need to make these challenging decisions.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: Yes, back to the Premier again. Premier, in your desperate race to raise more revenue, you've put forward another punitive tax hike without any consideration of its economic consequences. In fact, the airline industry says that when it asked you for an economic impact assessment on your aviation fuel tax, you couldn't provide one.

We all know it's the policy of your government to tax first and ask questions later, but you still have time to chart a new course. Premier, will you do the right thing and remove this tax hike from your budget, or will you recklessly move forward with no regard for middle-class Ontarians and our economy?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Our budget was clear and our platform was clear. We're going to build public transit in this province. It's not easy, but we've laid out a path to get us there, unlike the member opposite and his party and unlike the other opposition party. It's not easy, and we're going to have to work together as a province. We're going to have to work with our business community, and in this case the aviation sector.

We will work with the airlines to ensure they can adjust to these challenges. But this tax hasn't been touched since 1992. They're paying less as a percentage than other fuel in our economy. The fact of the matter is that in order to ensure the competitiveness of our economy and our quality of life, we need to invest \$29 billion in public transit and transportation in this province. We're going to get that job done. It's not going to be easy, but we've laid out a path to get there. I commend the budget that we're about to bring forward and ask for your support.

GO TRANSIT

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Since I first arrived at Queen's Park, I've been working with all parties to get year-round GO train service to Niagara Falls.

The 12 mayors, the regional chairs, businesses and residents of my riding have been clear: It's time for the government to deliver daily GO train service to Niagara

Falls. In fact, during the campaign, the Chair of Cabinet promised to get the job done. He admitted that the Welland Canal was not a problem after all, and he committed the government to delivering GO train service in 2015.

After all the delays, will the Minister of Transportation commit today to ensuring year-round GO train service all the way to Niagara Falls? If not, why not?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to thank the member for Niagara Falls for that question. I know it's an important question for the community that he represents, and also for the people of Niagara region.

But what I want to particularly do this morning is pay tribute to the member from St. Catharines, who is an individual who has long been a champion for making sure that we can continue to invest in his region. That member from St. Catharines understands, as we do on this side of the House, why it is so crucial that we pass the budget that we have put before the people of Ontario, which includes \$29 billion for investments in crucial infrastructure, including transportation and including transit.

I sincerely hope that the member from Niagara Falls, who has put forward the question this morning, will encourage his colleagues to work with us to pass the budget, so that we can keep moving Ontario forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Wayne Gates: The Liberals were very clear during their campaign. They said they would expand GO service outside the GTA. They said they would deliver GO service that the people and businesses of Niagara Falls need.

The Chair of Cabinet couldn't have been more direct when he promised year-round GO train service to Grimsby, St. Catharines and Niagara Falls. He said, "I'm committed to it, and the government is committed to it, in 2015."

Speaker, will the minister confirm that year-round GO train service will be delivered all the way to Niagara Falls?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member opposite for his supplementary, but again I say to that member, and to his leader and the rest of the folks on that side of the House, that that is why it is so important for them to listen to what took place during the course of the recent election campaign—to heed the voices of the people of Ontario, work with us on this side and pass the budget, so that over the next 10 years we can invest \$29 billion in all kinds of fantastic projects for Niagara region and the rest of the province, whether it's the GTHA or beyond.

I said in my initial answer that the member for St. Catharines has long been a champion for additional investments in his community. Because of the local leadership of the member from St. Catharines, he has been able to deliver positive results for his community, including GO train summer service and GO buses to Burlington. I want to thank the member from St. Catharines for his advocacy and his being a strong champion for the people of Niagara region.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): New question. The member for Etobicoke North.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

M. Shafiq Qaadri: Merci, monsieur le Président. Premièrement, je voudrais vous féliciter pour votre réélection. Ma question est pour le ministre de l'Énergie, the Honourable Bob Chiarelli.

As part of our energy platform for the province, conservation is, of course, an important component. I continue to receive a number of inquiries from my own residents in the great riding of Etobicoke North about energy conservation.

My residents are not merely interested in doing their part to save the planet, but more particularly how energy conservation initiatives can affect their own personal consumer energy bills. They want to know, in a word, how they can save money.

Now, in my fourth term here in Parliament, I have seen our government's energy strategy evolve and how we have worked to publicize, strengthen, foster and reward a culture of conservation.

My question is this: Will the minister please inform this chamber about the specific actions and the latest thinking that our government is taking to promote energy conservation for the province?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I thank the member from Etobicoke North for his interest in this matter. Conservation is one of the cleanest and most cost-effective energy resources. It offers consumers a way to reduce their bills, and reduces the need to build new generation, transmission and distribution infrastructure.

That is why our government made Conservation First a key element of our long-term energy plan, so we can build on the work that has been done to foster a culture of conservation in Ontario. As we plan for Ontario's electricity needs, we will invest in all cost-effective conservation before new generation.

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To ensure we aggressively pursue all conservation options, we set a 2032 conservation target of 30 terawatt hours, enough to power a city the size of Toronto.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Minister, I appreciate the strides that Ontario has made in energy conservation under our government.

Interjection.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Speaker, while I do appreciate the encouragement I receive constantly from the member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek with his consistent heckling, I would invite him, at least, to sit in his own seat while he does so.

I understand that according to the Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance, we have already improved Ontario's conservation rating from a C- to an A+ over the past seven years. Speaker, that's a rating that's going in the right direction. Yet there is always more work to be done, particularly on such an important file as energy. We must

continue to give electricity consumers in Ontario more tools to help them conserve energy in their homes and businesses.

Speaker, could the minister please tell the House what programs are available to homeowners and small businesses to help them conserve energy and save money?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, saving energy means saving money. For every dollar invested in energy efficiency, Ontario has avoided about \$2 in system costs. The same is true for consumers. Energy you don't use is energy you don't pay for.

Through government programs, consumers now have access to information and funding to choose the most energy-efficient appliances and products for their homes and for their businesses.

We will also introduce new financing tools, including on-bill financing for energy efficiency retrofits, starting in 2015.

The peaksaver PLUS program has helped some consumers reduce their consumption by up to 9%.

You won't hear the other parties talking about conservation. I think the opposition—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

New question.

SKILLED TRADES

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, I want to congratulate you on your appointment to this position.

As you know—and I hope you've been briefed on this—Bernie Fishbein, the electricians' union's long-time lawyer, chaired a number of ratio review panels for the Ontario College of Trades, including the review for the electrician trade. It is alleged in an application for judicial review that Mr. Fishbein was in a conflict of interest when he chaired the electricians' review panel, as he failed to disclose his long-standing professional relationship as a lawyer with the electricians' union. The electricians' union was one of the participants in the ratio review, and Mr. Fishbein recommended their proposal for the ratio review of the electricians' trade.

Mr. Speaker, a conflict of interest is very unacceptable to Ontarians, particularly when it comes to decisions affecting their careers and businesses. So I will ask the minister: Will the minister direct the College of Trades to ignore Mr. Fishbein's recommendations and order a complete new review for this trade?

Hon. Reza Moridi: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for that question. Investing in the people of Ontario is of prime importance for this government. That's why we have created the Ontario College of Trades. For the first time in the history of this province, tradespeople have the same rights as doctors, dentists, teachers and nurses to make decisions in relation to their own business. It's not for the politicians, it's not for the bureaucrats, to make decisions for them. That's why we have created the Ontario College of Trades.

It's just over a year since the college started its operation, and they have made great progress. They have

reviewed 33 professions, and, out of that, they have reduced ratios. The member opposite has always asked questions in this chamber about reducing the ratios. They have reduced the ratios for, I believe, 14 professions, and they have also introduced one more profession into the compulsory category. They have been doing a great job within the short time since they started operation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Minister, I think the first thing is, you'd better get briefed on this College of Trades.

Your government and your biased appointment of the electricians' union lawyer has raised apprenticeship ratios for electricians from 3 to 1 to a convoluted 6 to 1—a 6-to-1 ratio review.

Minister, your new 6-to-1 ratio for electricians is a barrier to entering the electricians' trade, and it affects small businesses. Do you not understand that? Why won't you reject the biased advice of the electricians' union lawyer and your biased process, and lower apprenticeship ratios for electricians to what we want: a 1-to-1 ratio? That's what we want.

Hon. Reza Moridi: Mr. Speaker, the ratios are basically the number of journeypersons—the teachers to students. This is a decision the college should be making, not me, not politicians and not bureaucrats. That's why we have created the Ontario College of Trades, and that's what they are doing.

In just over a year since their operation, they have reviewed 33 professions and they have actually reduced the ratios for 14 professions. They have been doing a great job. We are going to review and appoint an adviser to the Ontario College of Trades in the near future, so that the college's operations can be reviewed in general. That is our position.

I'm sure the member opposite, who comes from a trade background himself, knows very well that it's very important that tradespeople have to decide on their own the ratio of teachers to students in this profession.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. According to the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, our province is failing an alarming number of post-secondary students. Fully two thirds of students are worried that they won't have enough money to complete their degree. At approximately \$8,000, Ontario has the highest undergraduate tuition fees in Canada, and concerns about taking on huge debt loads are causing some students, particularly those from underrepresented groups, to think twice about university education.

How can the minister defend a budget that does nothing to improve access to post-secondary education, does nothing to reduce barriers and make sure we are leveraging the talents and skills of all of our young people?

Hon. Reza Moridi: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for that question. Since we came to office in 2003, we have invested heavily in secondary and post-secondary education. Actually, our higher education

plan with a \$6.2-billion investment has been and is the biggest and the largest investment in post-secondary education in the past 40 years in the history of this province.

As a result of these heavy investments in our post-secondary education, we have created 170,000 more spaces for our students so that our young people can get a higher education in our universities and colleges. We have reduced tuition fees by 30%. The member opposite and her party actually voted against that 30% reduction. This saves \$530 million to our students in order to be able to continue their education.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1138 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CHANTRY CHINOOK CLASSIC SALMON DERBY

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I rise today to share with you the highlights of the 31st annual Chantry Chinook Classic Salmon Derby media day.

For many, the amazing riding of Huron–Bruce is commonly known perhaps for Bruce Power or for its vast production of agricultural commodities, but it is also known as Ontario's west coast, as it is rich in recreational and tourism destinations like the 31st annual Chantry Chinook Classic Salmon Derby.

This past Friday, by 7 a.m., on board Dwindle's Dream, a group of us headed out into Lake Huron to see if we could do our captain and first mate, Rick and Chris Dwinell, proud during our four-hour media day adventure.

Fishing has become quite high tech. Fish finders, downrigging and fishing poles sitting in well-positioned holders across the back of the boat made the task more interesting for me, and one could say I am hooked.

Long story short, our crew, which included Liz Dadson of Kincardine Times, Gary Byers of a sports radio show in Owen Sound, and Dale Hainer of Ontario Out of Doors, reeled in eight out of 11, and we did our captain and first mate proud. We ended up with a chinook, a coho and six nice-sized lake trout.

My claim was to make the first catch of the day as well as a 7.5-pound lake trout. I'm proud to say that the proverbial big one did not get away, as Liz Dadson reeled in an 11.5-pound chinook as well as top honours of the day with her catch.

The actual Chantry Chinook Classic Salmon Derby runs July 26 to August 10, and I encourage everyone to make the trip to Kincardine or Port Elgin.

RIDING OF NIAGARA FALLS

Mr. Wayne Gates: In the last six months, I've gone through two elections and knocked on many doors in

Niagara Falls, Fort Erie, Niagara-on-the-Lake and surrounding communities, so I've had the opportunity to hear the residents and their concerns. The residents want to see their communities thriving again.

In Fort Erie, there's a chance for the province to save the heart of the town: the racetrack. Simply put, the racetrack cannot survive on 37 race days. The track needs at least 72 to 77 race days, and we need to return the slots to the track. If we take these actions, we can help protect 1,000 jobs there and create more.

On Tuesday, July 29, the track will be hosting the 79th Prince of Wales Stakes, the second jewel in the Canadian Triple Crown. With full support from the racing community, I'd like to personally invite Premier Wynne to come to visit Fort Erie for the Prince of Wales Stakes. I'd like the Premier to experience everything that Fort Erie has to offer and see how important the racetrack and the slots are to the town and the Niagara region.

We must reverse the trend of empty plazas and high unemployment and get new businesses into empty storefronts. A long-term solution which would protect the track will do that.

Speaker, Niagara should be and can be the engine that drives the recovery of the province. In Niagara Falls, we have a great opportunity to build the economy by bringing year-round, all-day GO train service. Even members from the Liberal Party admit that the Welland Canal is not an obstacle. We can bring in the trains to stimulate the local economy and put people back to work. They told me the issues, and I'll keep raising them here in the Legislature.

WORLD CUP

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Mr. Speaker, while thousands of Canadians tuned in to watch the exciting conclusion of the month-long FIFA World Cup soccer event, I want to share with you and the members of this House how this event played out in the city of Kitchener, which is home to one of the strongest German communities in Ontario and in Canada.

At the Concordia Club, a German cultural centre established more than 140 years ago, eager soccer fans began arriving early in the morning, overwhelming the organizers, who did not expect such a big crowd. By noon the place was packed to capacity with about 500 people, with hundreds more lined up outside.

The two-hour match between Germany and Argentina was tension-filled, as neither team was able to score during regulation time. But when Germany's Mario Götze finally drove the ball into the net at the 112-minute mark in extra time, Kitchener's Concordia Club erupted in jubilation. That was soon followed by joyous fans spilling out onto the streets of Waterloo region, where they paraded through the downtown.

Canada is a country of immigrants, and when we see an event like this where athletes from our nations of origin excel, it captures our attention. This was the beautiful game played out to its finest, with the outstanding German team deserving the win. The World Cup is truly

wunderbar, and today the good people of Kitchener are relishing in this victory.

LISTOWEL ARMOURIES

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I am pleased to recognize the 100th anniversary of the Listowel Armouries. On Saturday I had the privilege of attending the commemoration ceremony to mark this milestone. The celebration highlighted the armoury's building and honoured those who trained there, those who served our country overseas and those currently serving.

The event featured an advanced demonstration by the Guelph regiment, an afternoon flyover by two World War I vintage aircraft, viewings of large war memorabilia collections, and a moving piece by Cambridge artist Dave Sopha which features the portraits of our fallen Canadian soldiers from the Afghanistan war.

The Listowel Armouries were originally built in 1914 and housed the 100th battery of the 21st Royal Canadian artillery regiment through both the First and Second World Wars. The Listowel Agricultural Society acquired the building in 1970, preserving the traditional armoury style. Today, the building is known as the Listowel Agricultural Hall and is busy year-round with fundraising events, celebrations and the annual Listowel Fair.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to Saturday's celebration. Thank you to Elizabeth Johnston, the fair organizer, and the entire Listowel Agricultural Society, all of whom have worked tirelessly putting this event together. Thank you to the councils and staff of North Perth and Perth county, which have supported this project since the beginning. Thank you to the many donors and sponsors who came together to offer their support. To the many volunteers, participants and attendees, thank you for celebrating this historic landmark.

EVENTS IN NICKEL BELT

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm very pleased to rise today and share with you how much I enjoyed the blueberry pancake breakfast at the Skead Community Centre yesterday. The breakfast was the kickoff to Sudbury's 29th annual Blueberry Festival. Did you know that blueberries have been named the world's most nutritious fruit? They have strong antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, especially wild blueberries, which grow in abundance throughout my riding.

In fact, I was at a C.R. Judd Public School graduation in Capreol, and past graduates were telling me that they make over \$100 a day picking blueberries for the blueberry co-op. You can buy the fruits of their labour everywhere in Nickel Belt, including at the Anderson Farm farmers' market on Wednesdays in Walden.

And don't forget: Capreol Days are fast approaching. On the August long weekend join the museum and the town for a celebration of everything Capreol. There will be vendors, food, beer tents and live music. The CN

safety train, Little Obie, will be there, giving rides to the families, as well as Miss Lily's Olde Time Photos at the heritage centre.

In closing, I want to congratulate all of the volunteers from the Walden Mountain Bike Club for a fantastic turnout for the Canada Cup/Ontario Cup mountain bike cross-country event this weekend. It was fun, exciting and extremely well-organized. Thank you to Rob St. Marseille, the president; Rusty; and the volunteer coordinator, Mary Waddell.

PAN AM GAMES

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I rise today to tell you about a wonderful event that I attended in Halton over the weekend. I was honoured to participate in the one-year countdown to the Toronto 2015 Pan Am/Parapan American Games in Milton. The cycling events for the games will be taking place in Halton and the one-year countdown was a very special celebration. There was something there for all ages, and of course most of the events had something to do with the cycling theme. People young and old hopped on bikes during the day to take part in the Keep the Bikes Spinning Challenge. It was tons of fun. There were also other activities, including live entertainment, food, vendors and even colouring for the kids.

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I remember when the space where the velodrome is being built was just an empty field—not anymore. These days, if you were to stroll to that field, you would see a magnificent, state-of-the-art cycling velodrome under construction. This will be the only facility of its kind in Canada, and it will be a combination of a high-performance indoor cycling track facility and a community recreation facility.

More than 10,000 exceptional athletes and officials from 41 countries are set to compete in the games, and Halton residents will have front-row seats to the cycling events. The level of competition is sure to be world class.

The velodrome will host other facilities—and there will be other things happening across the GTA, but the most important thing is that these facilities will be here and will give something back to our communities for years to come. They will create new opportunities to grow our economy and will attract local business opportunities. They will also help foster healthy living. Perhaps most importantly, they will also inspire future Canadian champions and allow them to train closer to home.

HUNTSVILLE HAWKS

Mr. Norm Miller: I rise in the House today to recognize an exceptional team of junior lacrosse players from the riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka. I would like to congratulate the 2013 Huntsville Hawks on winning the peewee D provincial championships at the annual sports festival in Whitby.

This past weekend, the Hawks celebrated their victory and raised their championship banner. This was while

playing host to the annual Jack Bionda Shootout peeewe tournament at the Don Lough Arena in Huntsville.

I would like to recognize coaches Rick Boucher, assistant coach Rob Ludlow, trainer Dave Thur and team manager Lesley Reynolds, as well as president of the Huntsville Minor Hawks, Cory Veitch. It is through their efforts and the help of countless volunteers—that contributed to the 2013 season being such a success.

Even though the team plays out of Huntsville, there are players representing communities from across Muskoka.

I am proud of this group of young athletes and wish them the best of luck this summer season as they defend their provincial gold.

Congratulations, Huntsville Hawks.

AURORA YOUTH SOCCER CLUB

Mr. Chris Ballard: I rise today to acknowledge the 50th anniversary of the Aurora Youth Soccer Club and to highlight the many contributions the organization has made to the town of Aurora and surrounding communities.

Since 1964, the Aurora Youth Soccer Club has provided youth and adults the opportunity to play the beautiful game of soccer. The club has provided members with the highest level of soccer development and the opportunity to develop friendships in a healthy, inclusive, enjoyable and safe environment by embracing the principles of good sportsmanship and fair play. Today, the club serves 4,200 participants from more than 2,700 local families.

Given that there are 56,000 people in Aurora, you'll understand why the Aurora Youth Soccer Club boasts the highest per capita soccer club participation in Canada. And yet the club remains a community-based, volunteer-driven organization.

Along with a robust house league, its representative teams play at the provincial and international levels.

If—no, when—Canada one day wins the World Cup, it will be because organizations across Ontario like the Aurora Youth Soccer Club have instilled in our young people a love of the sport and a solid foundation of how to play.

I'm sure members here today join me in congratulating the Aurora Youth Soccer Club on its 50th anniversary.

TORONTO EAST GENERAL HOSPITAL

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'm very happy to stand here to talk about a very important health care institution in my riding: Toronto East General Hospital. Toronto East General Hospital services not only Beaches—East York but also Toronto—Danforth, Scarborough West, Don Valley East and Don Valley West, the Premier's riding.

Early in the campaign, I had a chance to sit and talk with Rob Devitt, the president of the hospital. We spoke at great length about the planned addition at the hospital for a new patient care centre. They currently have ward

beds that service up to six people. In this day and age of contagious diseases and superbugs, that is just not an appropriate way of delivering health care, and they recognize it and they have an addition planned.

Funding for that plan was contained in the budget from May 1, which, unfortunately, was not supported by the other side of the House, forcing the election. They were very concerned that their whole project would have been in jeopardy if the right government wasn't elected.

I heard at the doorstep how important this institution was to the riding and how much they wanted to see this addition. Knowing that we would restore the funding was an important consideration for why people supported the Liberal plan.

With the election of our new majority government, I can tell you that everyone breathed a great sigh of relief. Assuming we can get this budget passed and we get the members opposite to support it, this project will go forward.

The community has raised almost \$60 million towards the project, making it extremely worthwhile. Lord Thomson of Fleet—Ken Thomson—and his wife, Marilyn, provided significant funding to it, so it will be known as the Ken and Marilyn Thomson Patient Care Centre.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PROTECTING EMPLOYEES' TIPS ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA PROTECTION DU POURBOIRE DES EMPLOYÉS

Mr. Potts moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 12, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to tips and other gratuities / *Projet de loi 12, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui concerne les pourboires et autres gratifications.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I think this is a very important bill. It was brought forward by the previous member for Beaches—East York a number of times, and I'm delighted to be able to reintroduce it here. It's a good bill, and it deserves all-member support.

ONTARIO BIKE MONTH ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LE MOIS DE LA BICYCLETTE EN ONTARIO

Ms. McMahon moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to proclaim the month of June as Ontario Bike Month / *Projet de loi 13, Loi proclamant le mois de juin Mois de la bicyclette en Ontario.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: This bill proclaims the month of June each year as Ontario Bike Month. I think it's an excellent piece of legislation and an opportunity for the provincial government to celebrate Ontarians, right across this province, who enjoy cycling on a daily basis for recreation or daily transportation.

PETITIONS

MARKDALE HOSPITAL

Mr. Bill Walker: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Grey Bruce Health Services' Markdale hospital is the only health care facility between Owen Sound and Orangeville on the Highway 10 corridor;

"Whereas the community of Markdale rallied to raise \$13 million on the promise they would get a new state-of-the-art hospital in Markdale;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care announce as soon as possible its intended construction date for the new Markdale hospital and ensure that the care needs of the patients and families of our community are met in a timely manner."

I support this petition, will sign it and send it with page Matthew.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have a petition signed by people from right across Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

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"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

I agree with this petition. I will affix my name and give it to page Lavanya to take up to the Clerk.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Health Canada has approved the use of Esbriet for patients with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF), a rare, progressive and fatal disease characterized by scarring of the lungs; and

"Whereas Esbriet, the first and only approved medication in Canada for the treatment of IPF, has been shown to slow disease progression and to decrease the decline in lung function; and

"Whereas the lack of public funding for Esbriet is especially devastating for seniors with IPF who rely exclusively on the provincial drug program for access to medications;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately provide Esbriet as a choice to patients with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis and their health care providers in Ontario through public funding."

I agree with this petition and I affix my name to it and I give it to page Tania.

LYME DISEASE

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's, Alzheimer's, arthritic diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe; and

"Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of their professional journal that

Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario Health Insurance Plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process of establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives at 45% to 95% of the time;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health to direct that the Ontario public health system and OHIP include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme diagnosis, to do everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians."

I agree with this petition. I'll affix my name and send it to the desk with Aysha.

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France G  linas: I have this petition that comes from the northeast.

"Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline; and

"Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

"Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of gas-price regulation; and

"Whereas jurisdictions with gas-price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices;"

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to "mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page David to bring it to the Clerk.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Mr. Speaker, this is a petition on planning for Ontario's future.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is absolutely crucial that more is done to provide Ontarians retirement financial security which they can rely on;

"Whereas the federal government has refused to partner with our government to ensure that Ontarians have a secure retirement plan;

"Whereas more than three million Ontarians rely on the Canada Pension Plan alone, that currently does not provide enough to support an adequate standard of living;

"Whereas the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will provide the safe and stable retirement that Ontarians need;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario assembly support a plan to move forward with an Ontario-made pension retirement plan that will provide a financially secure retirement for Ontarians."

I agree with this petition and I will put my name to it.

WORKPLACE INSURANCE

Mr. Bill Walker: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas, beginning on January 1, 2013, the WSIB was expanded to include groups of employers and principals who had previously been exempt from WSIB and had private insurance; and

"Whereas this new financial burden does nothing to improve worker safety and only drives up the cost of doing business in Ontario;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To repeal the statutory obligations created by Bill 119."

I support this petition, will affix my signature and send it with page Matthew again.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have a petition from people across Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

I am pleased to affix my name to the top of this petition and send it with page Hayden.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas it is absolutely crucial that more is done to provide Ontarians retirement financial security which they can rely on;

"Whereas the federal government has refused to partner with our government to ensure that Ontarians have a secure retirement plan;

"Whereas more than three million Ontarians rely on the Canada Pension Plan alone, that currently does not provide enough to support an adequate standard of living;

"Whereas the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will provide the safe and stable retirement that Ontarians need;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario assembly support a plan to move forward with an Ontario-made pension retirement plan that will provide a financially secure retirement for Ontarians."

I support this, I'll affix my name to it and I will send it with Brendan.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Bill Walker: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Green Energy Act has driven up the cost of electricity in Ontario due to unrealistic subsidies for certain energy sources, including the world's highest subsidies for solar power; and

"Whereas this cost is passed on to ratepayers through the global adjustment, which can account for almost half of a ratepayer's hydro bill; and

"Whereas the high cost of energy is severely impacting the quality of life of Ontario's residents, especially fixed-income seniors; and

"Whereas it is imperative to remedy Liberal mismanagement in the energy sector by implementing immediate reforms detailed in the Ontario PC white paper Paths to Prosperity—Affordable Energy;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009, and all other statutes that artificially inflate the cost of

electricity with the aim of bringing down electricity rates and abolishing expensive surcharges such as the global adjustment and debt retirement charges."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name and send it with page Victoria.

DENTAL CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from all over Ontario.

"Whereas thousands of Ontarians live with pain and infection because they cannot afford dental care;

"Whereas the promised \$45-million dental fund under the Poverty Reduction Strategy excluded impoverished adults;

"Whereas the program was designed with rigid criteria so that most of the people in need do not qualify; and

"Whereas desperately needed dental care money went unspent and was diverted to other areas even though people are still suffering without access to dental care;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario ... to do all in its power to stop the dental fund from being diverted to support other programs; and

"To fully utilize the commissioned funding to provide dental care to those in need."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Thomas to bring it to the Clerk.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Mr. John Fraser: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas it is absolutely crucial that more is done to provide Ontarians retirement financial security which they can rely on;

"Whereas the federal government has refused to partner with our government to ensure that Ontarians have a secure retirement plan;

"Whereas more than three million Ontarians rely on the Canada Pension Plan alone, that currently does not provide enough to support an adequate standard of living;

"Whereas the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will provide the safe and stable retirement that Ontarians need;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario assembly support a plan to move forward with an Ontario-made pension retirement plan that will provide a financially secure retirement for Ontarians."

I agree with this petition, am affixing my name to it and giving it to—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES

Mr. Bill Walker: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the University of Guelph's Kemptville and Alfred campuses are two of Ontario's outstanding post-secondary agricultural schools; and

"Whereas these campuses have delivered specialized and high-quality programs to generations of students from agricultural communities across eastern Ontario and the future success of the region's agri-food industry depends on continuing this strong partnership; and

"Whereas regional campuses like those in Kemptville and Alfred ensure the agri-food industry has access to the knowledge, research and innovation that are critical for Ontario to remain competitive in this rapidly changing sector;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Premier Wynne in her dual capacity as Minister of Agriculture and Food act immediately to reverse the University of Guelph's short-sighted and unacceptable decision to close its Kemptville and Alfred campuses."

I fully support, will sign my name and send it with page Matthew for the third time.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from people from Nickel Belt.

"Whereas the Ontario government has made ... (PET) scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients...; and

"Whereas, since October 2009, insured PET scans are performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with Health Sciences North, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through Health Sciences North, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Stephanie to bring it to the Clerk.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is absolutely crucial that more is done to provide Ontarians retirement financial security which they can rely on;

"Whereas the federal government has refused to partner with our government to ensure that Ontarians have a secure retirement plan;

"Whereas more than three million Ontarians rely on the Canada Pension Plan alone, that currently does not provide enough to support an adequate standard of living;

"Whereas the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will provide the safe and stable retirement that Ontarians need;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario assembly support a plan to move forward with an Ontario-made pension retirement plan that will provide a financially secure retirement for Ontarians."

I agree to this and affix my name to it. I give it to Emma to deliver.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Since the time for petitions has been thoroughly exhausted and pursuant to standing order 58(b), this House stands recessed until 4 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1334 to 1600.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2014 ONTARIO BUDGET

BUDGET DE L'ONTARIO DE 2014

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by Ms. Wynne, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Sousa has moved, seconded by Ms. Wynne, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

I would ask everyone's indulgence as the budgets are being dispersed. Don't put anything in the area in which we can have our pages deliver.

The Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying—
Interjections.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I rise to present the 2014 Ontario budget.

Seventy-four days ago, we tabled a plan in this Legislature for the people of this province. It was a good one.

For a brighter, stronger future.

A plan that creates greater opportunity and security for Ontarians ...

In all corners of our province.

We committed to reintroducing this budget if elected ... and we are following through on that commitment today.

At home I was taught to look out for others ... not just yourself.

To be open-minded ...

To seek input ...

And then make informed decisions.

So, since I last tabled this budget, we took that plan to the people ...

From Sault Ste. Marie to Scarborough ...

From Windsor to Walkerton ...

From Barrie to Burlington.

And they entrusted us and our plan ...

A plan that we begin to move forward ... today.

Mr. Speaker, Ontarians' talent and skills, their compassion and competitiveness, their diversity and support for one another ...

Are what make our province so great.

Our plan builds on those strengths ...
Our plan provides more opportunity ...
Our plan helps everyone achieve their best ...
And helps grow the economy.
It's designed to support all people of our province ...
And it does so by investing in the education and training that are necessary for the skills of tomorrow ...

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By building up public transit to reduce congestion ...
By connecting communities across the province with new roads and highways ...

By partnering with businesses to create good jobs ...
By providing greater financial security for those retiring ...

And ... underlying our plan is an unwavering commitment to balance the budget by 2017-18.

Mr. Speaker, our plan looks not only at the days ahead ... but also at the decade ahead.

We have an economy with great potential ...

We have a reputation as a hub for global business.

Companies around the world want to invest in our province.

Ontario is, in fact, ranked first in North America for attracting foreign direct investment.

And we have one of the most diversified economies in the world ...

That is why our plan invests today for a better tomorrow.

We will make the right investments ... in skills and training ... in infrastructure ... and in business to strengthen our competitive advantage ...

Pour créer plus de possibilités et d'emplois.

Mr. Speaker, to build skills in the long term we will protect full-day kindergarten and the 30% Off Ontario Tuition grant.

From early years learning through to post-secondary, we want to ensure Ontarians build the right skills through their lifetime.

And for those who have just graduated from high school, we will introduce Experience Ontario.

A program that would give young adults valuable work experience before they choose their path in life.

And as mentioned on May 1, we are introducing a new \$2.5-billion Jobs and Prosperity Fund.

We will use this fund to partner with businesses to encourage new investment in Ontario.

And we will make investments so people can keep us at the leading edge of innovation.

This will help businesses grow and it will help them hire more people.

Mr. Speaker, we also know we live in a global economy.

So we will continue to go to other parts of the world to encourage more companies to invest here in Ontario.

As the Premier announced in the speech from the throne ... the first trade mission of this government will be to China in the fall.

Mr. Speaker, when I was last here, I said that Ontario's growth has outpaced its infrastructure for decades.

Governments of all political stripes failed to make the necessary investments to unclog our highways ...

And while over the last 10 years we have made major investments to improve public transit, roads, highways and bridges, there is still more to do.

We need to position our province for the future.

The time has come for a plan that will improve not only the lives of Ontarians today ...

But also the lives of our children and grandchildren tomorrow.

Our transportation plan—Moving Ontario Forward—would dedicate two new funds to fight traffic congestion and invest in transit totalling \$29 billion.

The first would help address congestion in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area.

The second fund would invest in critical projects across the rest of the province.

This is part of a \$130-billion, 10-year investment in infrastructure.

And not just for roads and highways ...

We are also investing in new schools and hospitals and other priorities ... and are working to ensure our infrastructure will withstand the extreme weather we're now experiencing due to climate change.

Notre plan stimulera immédiatement l'emploi et l'économie.

Our plan will help businesses get their goods to market faster, making them more competitive—that enables growth and the hiring of more people.

And our plan will also help people get to work, home and school more quickly and safely.

All of this means long-term prosperity for Ontario and an even better quality of life for our families.

Mr. Speaker, we will also invest \$1 billion for the development of the Ring of Fire in northern Ontario.

This area contains \$60-billion worth of minerals, including for the production of stainless steel.

And we will continue to work to bring the federal government to the table as a partner to seize on this tremendous economic opportunity for both the province and our country.

As part of our plan and in keeping with the public's priority, we must also help secure the retirement of people who have worked their whole lives.

Unless we take action now, too many workers will be left with a lower standard of living ...

And that would be unacceptable.

That is why we are introducing the first-of-its-kind mandatory provincial plan to build on the Canada Pension Plan.

And we have appointed an associate minister responsible for implementing our new pension plan.

Because ... after a lifetime of contributing to the economy, retirees deserve better.

As I have said before, our plan would build on the strengths of the CPP.

Our plan would enhance benefits for middle-income earners while keeping contribution rates low.

The Ontario Retirement Pension Plan would be publicly administered at arm's length ...

The ORPP would have a strong governance model, with experts responsible for managing investments.

Mr. Michael Nobrega is here, also chairing that implementation strategy. We appreciate his efforts as well.

Mr. Speaker, we are moving forward with this plan.

Just a few weeks ago ... the Premier, the Associate Minister of Finance and I met with the technical advisory group ...

We are all working to introduce this new pension plan in 2017.

Going forward, we will continue to engage with other provinces and territories and welcome them to join our plan.

And we hope that all members of this House will support it as well ...

Just like the majority of people in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to balancing the budget by 2017-18.

We are on track to beat our deficit target for the fifth year in a row.

This means that, over the last five years, Ontario's debt is \$24 billion lower than originally projected.

Since 2010-11, our growth in program spending has been held to an average of 1.4% per year.

Over the next three years, average growth in program spending will be less than 1.1% a year.

Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge that there are skeptics ...

But let me be clear: We will balance the budget by 2017-18.

We will control expenses.

We will eliminate the deficit.

And we will continue to cut where we can.

But we will continue to invest where we must.

Of which supports our priority to balance the budget.

In order to support a stronger economy and create more jobs ... that means, Mr. Speaker, we must control our expenses.

We will continue to manage compensation with our broader public sector partners to ensure that all costs are within Ontario's existing fiscal framework.

We propose to continue to freeze MPP pay as of April 1, 2009, until the budget is balanced.

And Mr. Speaker, we have a proven track record in managing expenses and achieving deficit targets.

And I commit to continuing to meet those targets going forward.

Mr. Speaker, we will not stop once the deficit is eliminated.

We will continue to control those costs in order to further reduce debt ...

Because we must not allow future generations to face that burden.

We must do what we can now ...

In fairness to our children and grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, the new President of the Treasury Board will work closely with me, the Premier, the Treasury Board members and our cabinet colleagues to meet our fiscal objectives.

Accordingly, we must also act on the revenue side.

As noted in the budget, we are proposing to increase the aviation fuel tax by one cent per litre on September 1, 2014, and by one cent per litre annually until 2017.

I also previously identified changes to the Ontario small business deduction to phase out this tax benefit for large corporations.

And as indicated, we propose a personal income tax change for the highest 2% of tax filers in Ontario.

In addition to our measures on the expense side, these additional revenues would help to fund transit and to pay down the deficit.

Mr. Speaker, we will also look at maximizing and unlocking the full value of government assets ...

Including real estate and crown corporations such as OPG, Hydro One and the LCBO.

We will receive independent advice from an advisory council ... led by retiring CEO of TD Bank Group, Mr. Ed Clark.

Unlocking the full value of these assets means improving efficiency and enhancing their performance and revenue.

1620

We owe it to all Ontarians to extract greater worth and returns for them as taxpayers—the ultimate owners.

We will reinvest those assets to create greater returns and build a stronger future.

Mr. Speaker, let's also keep in mind that Ontario runs the leanest government in Canada.

We are moving forward with more than 80% of Don Drummond's recommendations for creating efficiencies in the public sector ...

And we're surpassing expectations throughout the system.

We continue to have the lowest per-capita program spending of any province ...

So it's important that we find the right balance ...

We will continue to reduce and eliminate the deficit ...

While ensuring that we invest in vital public services.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Ontario want their government to provide services so that they can achieve their best.

That is why we will lead from the activist centre.

Building opportunity ...

Securing their future.

Our government is making Ontario's schools and hospitals among the best in the world.

So as part of our plan, we will look to transform delivery and cover costs while maintaining the quality of those services.

In May, I spoke about workers in developmental services, early childhood educators and those providing care in the homes of our elderly.

Nous devons faire plus pour investir dans ces travailleurs...

So beginning this year, we are increasing the support that we provide to these valuable care workers.

And, Mr. Speaker, we will also continue to foster consumer protection and reduce everyday costs for Ontario families ...

Particularly when it comes to auto insurance.

We will reduce auto insurance rates by 15% on average in Ontario over two years.

While progress has been made, more must be done.

Given the delayed passage of an important bill prior to the election that would have lowered costs this spring ...

I will reintroduce legislation tomorrow that takes aim at unfair practices in the towing and storage process of vehicles involved in accidents.

We will continue to find new ways to reduce costs in the system and pass on those savings to consumers.

Mr. Speaker, we are also introducing amendments to the Pension Benefits Act, previously part of Bill 151, which would include changes to help those affected by split pensions resulting from past government divestments.

And finally, we are proposing changes to the Electricity Act, which were previously introduced in Bill 153, Complying with International Trade Obligations Act, 2014.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government must partner and work better with the provinces, including Ontario, as well.

Just last week we made some headway ... two new provinces ... Saskatchewan and New Brunswick ... signed on to be part of a co-operative capital markets regulatory system.

A co-operative regulator would strengthen securities regulation across the country ...

And increase protection for everyday investors.

And Ontario was a leader in pursuing it.

We need a strong, sustainable partnership ... in all areas.

Mr. Speaker, we are all partners.

Ontarians expect that we will ensure that they all have equal ability to achieve their best, too.

To help pull people out of poverty ... through programs such as the Ontario Child Benefit.

To give everyone the ability to succeed ... through skills training and a world-class education system.

When it comes to the Ring of Fire, we expect the federal government to partner with us because it is a national economic priority.

We are looking for a federal partner to build better transit ... because it is a national economic priority.

Mr. Speaker, we are simply looking for a federal partner to treat Ontarians fairly ... because it is ... also ... an economic priority.

Each year, the share of federal revenue raised in Ontario is higher than the share of federal spending in the province ... in a recent report, the gap was pegged at about \$11 billion.

This means that Ontarians' taxes are currently redistributed to other regions of Canada to subsidize programs and services that Ontarians themselves may not enjoy.

Mr. Speaker, no province is a more staunch supporter of Canadian federalism than Ontario, but this support cannot be taken for granted.

Our economy needs a boost, but we have a federal government that, by their actions, is hampering that recovery.

In 2014-15, our province will experience a year-over-year decline of \$641 million in major transfers.

According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer—the federal budget officer—over the last four years, the federal government paid a total of \$2.2 billion to other provinces to specifically prevent their transfers from falling.

This year, when Ontario was the only province facing a decline, the federal government ended the practice of transfer protection payments ... that is out of whack.

The people of Ontario deserve their fair share too.

Mr. Speaker, we know that we are stronger when we all work as one.

We must continually move forward.

Mr. Speaker, with the right plan ...

And the experience to deliver that plan ...

This decade will see Ontario move forward in the new global economy.

We will continue to be mindful of how we spend each dollar.

We will eliminate the deficit by 2017-18.

We will make the necessary investments to grow the economy ...

Create jobs ...

Build new public transit and roads for our people and communities ...

We will ensure a more secure retirement ...

And our government will deliver on this plan.

Mr. Speaker, Ontarians saw, and see, the potential of this plan.

For a stronger Ontario ...

With new opportunities ...

And a more secure future.

And I'd like to thank them for their hard work ... in making Ontario a great province.

And I'd like to thank them for their confidence in their government, newly elected on this very budget.

It is a privilege and we will honour it.

They have asked us to implement our plan.

Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what this government is going to do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you to our team for standing up for the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The official opposition House leader and the member from Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: I move adjournment of the debate, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Clark has moved adjournment of the debate. Do we agree? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the House to revert to introduction of bills.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): So ordered.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**BUILDING OPPORTUNITY
AND SECURING OUR FUTURE ACT
(BUDGET MEASURES), 2014****LOI DE 2014
OUVRANT DES PERSPECTIVES
ET ASSURANT NOTRE AVENIR
(MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)**

Mr. Sousa moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 14, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts / Projet de loi 14, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, I have no statement at this time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader has moved adjournment of the House. Do we agree? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The ayes have it.

This House is adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1629.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
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Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
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Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
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Cimino, Joe (NDP)	Sudbury	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
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MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa-Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Mileczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound-Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East-Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est-Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York-Simcoe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent-Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth-Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches-East York	
Qadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland-Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
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Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward-Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto-Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga-Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron-Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	
Vernile, Daïene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe-Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough-Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin-Middlesex-London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

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Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 41st Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 41^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 15 July 2014

Mardi 15 juillet 2014



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 15 July 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 15 juillet 2014

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that, for the purposes of standing order 6(b), the current meetings of the House shall be considered an extension of the spring sessional period provided for in standing order 6(a).

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Naqvi.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker, for giving me the opportunity and recognizing me. I will be sharing my time on this motion with the member from Etobicoke Centre, the member from Beaches–East York and the member from Northumberland–Quinte West.

Our government believes that midnight sittings are essential to allow the Legislature to strike committees and pass the budget in a timely manner, in keeping with the Premier's commitment to Ontarians. Speaker, as you are aware, the Premier, during the election campaign, spoke very forcefully and strongly about the need to ensure that the progressive plan that we have put forward through the budget be passed in the Legislature as soon as possible. Therefore, the Premier committed to call the Legislature back within 20 days of the election, if elected, so that we could get on with the work of the people. In that regard, that's exactly what she did. After the election, and after being given the opportunity by Ontarians to be their elected government, the Premier called the Legislature that came into place on July 2 with the election of the Speaker, followed by a speech from the throne on July 3 and the budget that was tabled just yesterday.

Speaker, we feel that in order to achieve the legislative agenda, and particularly the passage of the budget, the House would need to sit from 6 p.m. until midnight for a number of weeks to move forward with our progressive plan. I don't take joy in the fact that we may all have to sit here for the next couple of weeks until midnight to get the work done. I am disappointed that we have to take this step, but it is necessary, unfortunately, because the opposition parties have rejected striking the committees in keeping with the long-standing convention in the Legislature, instead advocating for a committee structure that has no precedent in Ontario.

I enjoy a good working relationship with the other House leaders, and we've been in constant conversation to ensure that we can reach some sort of an accommodation. But we also need to make sure on this side of the House that, when it comes to getting things done, when it comes to making sure that the budget that was presented by the Minister of Finance yesterday gets passed—we need to take this important step because this budget is perhaps one of the most important budgets being tabled at this juncture in our economy.

This is a budget which, as you know, was a result of the election. It was first presented on May 1 in the previous Parliament. The opposition parties, as you may recall, decided to vote against the budget; hence the election that took place. At the core of that election, at least for the government, was our plan around the budget, making sure that we are making important investments in our communities across the province, be they urban, suburban or rural communities, small towns or big cities. We're making the necessary investments to grow our economy, to create good-paying jobs, to ensure that we are building public transit and transportation infrastructure across the province, and also protecting hard-working Ontarians who may not have a workplace pension, through the creation of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan.

All those key elements that were so central to the campaign were part of the budget yesterday. Clearly, on June 12, Ontarians spoke. Ontarians spoke by voting in support of a progressive, positive plan that focuses on building Ontario up. They re-elected 58 Liberal members of provincial parliament, elected a majority government, to ensure that that work gets done. It is a very clear mandate that has been given by the people of this great province.

If I can speak about my community of Ottawa Centre, it has been a great honour for me to represent my community for seven years now; I was first elected in 2007. I've had an incredible opportunity to serve my community, from Glebe to Centretown to Carleton Heights to Carlington, the great neighbourhoods of Westboro, Hintonburg and Wellington Village. All those communities have been growing and evolving over the last several years. I have been very fortunate to be part of all that incredible growth and progress, working with my constituents every day on issues that are important.

One of the things, Speaker, that I've doing over the last seven years, something that I took the opportunity to talk to you about, is that, for the last seven years, I have been knocking on doors almost every weekend. I've had the opportunity, before getting into the election, to have

knocked on almost every single door in my riding of Ottawa Centre to be able to engage in conversations with constituents on issues that are important to them. Those conversations resulted in us getting things done for our communities.

When members of my community in the Westboro area told us that our schools in the urban core needed more investment, needed rebuilding, needed renovation, we worked together, and we were able to secure funding to rebuild Broadview school. Broadview school was built in 1926. There are several generations of members of my community who have gone through that school. Clearly that school needs a rebuild. We worked hard together. We were able to secure funding from the provincial government to rebuild the school, not to mention build an addition to another much older school, almost 100 years old, in the Glebe.

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Similarly, one of our big focuses has been investments in community health, making sure that we keep seniors at home, making sure that we continue to invest in things that make the lives of our seniors and those who may be vulnerable in the community healthier.

There are three community health centres in my riding: Centretown, Somerset West and Carlington. All three of those community health centres are going through a major expansion. Why? So that we can provide more services to my constituents, making sure that we're not only providing community care but we're also focusing on things like social services.

These, Speaker, all—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would remind the member to address and speak to the main motion at hand, please. Thank you.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker, for that gentle reminder. I was very much coming to that point.

I want to, first of all, congratulate you also in taking on the role as the Chair. I'm very happy to see you today in your Speaker's attire, which suits you very well. So congratulations on that particular role.

Speaker, I was highlighting some key accomplishments in my community for the fact that they're very much tied to the plan that we have put forward, the plan that we articulated to Ontarians during the election campaign. Those are the kinds of things that I was speaking of to my constituents, day in and day out, to make sure that we are continuing to move forward. That plan has been put forward.

When I was out in my community, knocking on doors every single day, my constituents sent me a very clear message: They wanted to see our budget approved. They wanted to see our budget passed as soon as possible so that we are making those important investments, investments like in the Ottawa River Action Plan, which is part of the budget, so that we prevent the flow of raw sewage into our beautiful Ottawa River, which is the spine of my city. That commitment is within that budget, not to men-

tion the \$29 billion over 10 years for the transit and transportation infrastructure plan.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Jim Watson will be happy.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Mayor Watson is quite excited. In fact, yesterday he spoke about how much he appreciates this budget. He hopes that this budget passes as quickly as possible so that those important investments start to flow, not only in my community of Ottawa but in all our respective communities, so that we are building this critically important infrastructure.

That's why, Speaker, this motion is so important. We need to work hard as much as we can at the outset so that we can debate this budget, so that we can debate the budget motion and we are able to pass this budget before the end of summer. Again, as I mentioned, Speaker, we could have worked together to make sure that the process was expedited, but, if not, we have to resort to evening sittings so there are opportunities for members to be able to speak about the budget, to talk about why the budget is important to their respective communities, and to talk about what they heard from their communities during the campaign as it relates to the critical investments in our hospitals, in our schools, in our community health centres, in roads and bridges and public transit, like the Ottawa light rail transit, phase one of which is under construction.

That's why, Speaker, we have this motion in front of us: so that there is the opportunity for us to be able to debate this budget and pass this budget according to the wishes of Ontarians that they clearly articulated through the outcome of the election, because what we need to focus on, at this juncture, is to build Ontario up. We need to make sure that we are making those critical, important investments in Ontarians, in things that we value, in public services that we rely on.

I am particularly very proud of the fact that we are making investments, through this budget, in our personal support workers. These people work very hard—some of the lowest-paid workers in our community. But these are individuals who look after our loved ones, our parents and grandparents, at their homes. We need to make sure that we pay them based on their skill sets and give them a much-needed pay raise, which is very much part of this budget.

Pay increases for early childhood educators are also very important. I can tell you, I have a two-year-old son, Rafi, who goes to daycare.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Rafi's a great guy.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: He's a great boy. I see the work that his child care provider does. She works extremely hard. We need to make sure that those hard-working early childhood educators get the raise so that they can continue to provide the excellent care they provide and help nourish our children, like my son Rafi—not to mention, of course, the investments we are going to make in the development sector and in that particular community. We need to make sure that our workers who work in that sector, who have a very difficult job on their hands—they look after some of the most vulnerable members of our communities—get the pay raise they deserve so much.

All these things are part of this very important budget that is going to help shape our communities, that is going to help grow our economy, that is going to help create jobs in our respective communities. Ontarians have asked us to implement this plan, and, as the Premier has said, we will deliver on that. That is why it's imperative that we table this motion and allow the Legislature to have midnight sittings to debate and pass the budget.

I hope that we can work together collaboratively to move Ontario in the right direction and begin implementing the plan that Ontarians have entrusted to us. I very much, Speaker, with your indulgence, look forward to the debate that takes place on this very important topic and to seeing the passage of this motion so that we can start working on debating this important budget and get to the passage of this budget so that this plan can be rolled out so that every single Ontarian could benefit from it.

Thank you very much for your time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Arthur Potts: J'ai l'honneur aujourd'hui de pouvoir remercier les résidents de Beaches–East York de m'avoir donné cette opportunité de les représenter. Et ça, pour commencer le débat sur un budget qui est très important pour eux.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour to be here and to have you in the chair. I was initially going to do a maiden speech or an inaugural speech, in which I'm normally afforded great latitude in the course of these debate proceedings. I understand now that the budget debate has shifted and we're now discussing a procedural motion. I would seek latitude from you as a new member of this House that I might have an opportunity, with my family present, to commence and speak to issues that brought me here for an opportunity to speak to this motion to rise and have a debate into the wee hours of the evening.

I will not call this a maiden speech, but the motion that is now before us I believe will very much help us pass the budget that was introduced earlier yesterday by the Minister of Finance. It's a very important document. It's a document that was central to my campaign in running in Beaches–East York. This motion is to help us resolve the issue of the standing committees, which is of course extremely, extremely important. During the course of me speaking to this motion on the committee structure and the budget and the opportunity to speak to midnight sessions, I still would like the members to get to know me a little bit better, and what has brought me here.

But before I do, I just wanted to make note of my friend sitting behind me, from Northumberland–Quinte West—

Hon. Jeff Leal: A great guy.

Mr. Arthur Potts: A great guy, yes: Mr. Rinaldi. Mr. Rinaldi was previously known as the leader of the rump caucus. Mr. Speaker, you will remember the days when there were more members of this House than the seats could accommodate on this side of the floor, and many of the new members in that past election had to be on the

other side of the floor in what was known as the rump. The member from—

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It's Lou.

0920

Mr. Arthur Potts: Mr. Lou gained some notoriety as a member of the rump caucus. I'm honoured to have him beside me here giving me suggestions and direction as we go forward in this debate.

It had also been my intention to speak a little bit to this concept of the maiden speech. This is what is getting us to an opportunity to speak to this continuation motion for evening debates. But I wonder, as a 56-year-old male, whether it's appropriate for someone like me to be giving a maiden speech, whether it's now or sometime in the future. I don't have any gender identification issues, I want to assure you, but as a male I wonder if "maiden" is the right term to be describing a speech in this very august House. I'm honoured to be here. I have no issues if others want to use that expression; I'm absolutely pro-choice, and if others want to use the expression "maiden" it's up to them, but I caution about—you know, we understand the concept of maiden voyage and how important is that first opportunity to address, even on something as unique as a procedural motion—

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: A Trojan Horse.

Mr. Arthur Potts: They talk maybe about a Trojan Horse speech. That's very good.

But it's very important—a maiden voyage is an interesting concept, but you have to understand that the concept of "maiden," the whole etymology of the word, also applies to things like maiden sacrifice. We understand why we had maidens being sacrificed years ago: It was because of their virtue and their chasteness; they were pure. We're not going to question the members' virtues, of course, but chaste? And is that how we want to be understood?

If I were to be giving an inaugural speech at this point, I would like it to be called that—or maybe, to take a sports analogy, my rookie speech.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would remind the speaker that the motion before us is one with regard to debate continuing beyond 6 o'clock today. I will allow some latitude, but I would ask that he stays somewhat focused on the motion at hand. Thank you.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will do my best to stay focused on the procedural motion that is being debated before us today—understanding, of course, that when the people of Beaches–East York elected me in what was a very tumultuous campaign, I had no idea, 75 days ago, when the budget was first introduced, that I would be in a position today of standing and speaking to a procedural motion. This came somewhat as a complete shock to me. I had seen the introduction of the budget, and as a Liberal observer I was very delighted with how the budget was playing out. I thought that this budget brought us back to our progressive roots as a party. There were tremendous investments in infrastructure, tremendous investments in education, in health care, in transit—the \$29-billion infrastructure transit fund, \$15 billion of

which would be invested in transit in the GTA. These were very, very important considerations. As a Liberal observer, I watched and I thought, "Great. I'm happy to support that."

But then, the day after, the election was called because members hadn't supported it, leading us to a position today where we're now in a procedural motion, trying to move forward. The day after was Saturday, May 3. I was at an event with a friend of mine, Dennis Mills, a great mentor and the federal member for Toronto—Danforth. I know many here would know Mr. Mills—a tremendous mentor and a personal friend. He had a call from someone in the party, in organizing, who said that they didn't have a candidate for Beaches—East York in the election and the writ was to be dropped imminently. He suggested that I should run. It wasn't something that was on my list, but he said to me, "Don't say yes now. If you say yes and you're elected, you may be speaking to some kind of a procedural motion when you should be doing an inaugural speech." He said, "Please, don't say yes now. I want you to go home. I want you to talk to your family and come back and maybe in the morning then you can say yes," which is what I did.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: And you said yes.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I did say yes. I actually went home and spoke with my mother. I hope to be able to recognize my mother at 10:30. She is in the gallery today with my family: my sister Roberta, my sister Diana and my sister's fiancé, Steve, who is a good friend of mine. We play tennis together regularly, Steve and I. He's teaching me the game and I'm hoping I'm being a good learner.

There was a Saturday—or a Sunday now—and I've agreed to say yes because my mother said, "Of course you should run." "You're genetically engineered for this," she said, "and your father would be very, very proud." So when I spoke with my wife, my partner, Lisa Martin, she too said, "Yes, please. You have the support of the family to run and hopefully win in Beaches—East York," which is what I did.

Now I find myself in a position when I can speak to a procedural motion, because we have some issues here with the House leader trying very hard to work with the House leaders on the other side of the table to develop a committee structure that follows traditions, I understand, of the Parliament, traditions which would allow that the majority government of the day would have a clear majority on all of the committees. That's a clear majority, Mr. Speaker, that I know you appreciate, in which the Chair of the committee is considered a neutral, which means you absolutely have to have a majority of the other existing members representing the government. This is the objective, and this is what has brought us to this debate today.

I hope we can resolve this issue, and if we need to go to debate from 6 o'clock to 12 o'clock at night, I know our side of the House is prepared to do it, to stand for that, and I will be here every day, as Mr. Bisson—

Interjection.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Well, let's stick with the principles that are traditional and not make them up on the fly. You

may have your principles, but the ones that you make up on the fly don't respect the traditions of this House, I would argue.

It hadn't been my intention to run at the time, and there it was Sunday. On Monday, we filed nomination papers. On Wednesday, the writ was dropped, and on Thursday, I had my official nomination. On Friday, I moved into a campaign office, had a campaign manager, and there we were in a full-fledged campaign with our first piece of literature.

I can say it was an absolute whirlwind romance to get me into a position where I could stand in this House today and support the government's motion—a whirlwind romance. It was somewhat reminiscent of how the member from Brant was re-elected as the Speaker of this House, Mr. Speaker. I remember seeing him with the member from Scarborough—Agincourt physically grabbing him, reluctant as he was, with his 6-foot-4 or 6-foot-5 frame, and she, a slight Asian woman, bringing him forward to do his duties. He was very reluctant at first, as I recall, but slowly, as he got closer to the chair, I could see that he was warming to the responsibilities. As my father would say, he responded to the clarion call, and that is what I think I am doing and have done in running for council: responding to the clarion call.

Now, I was proud to serve as the candidate, and it was an easy transition from my consulting work. The timing was good. My kids were in university, I had the time, and I could put my consulting projects on the side.

If you would allow me, at this point I would like to pay some respect to Mr. Prue, who was a member of the House from Beaches—East York, a member of the third party. Mr. Prue was a great guy, and I had no intention when I ran of actually winning. I thought I would be waving the flag for the party, helping them out, getting their message across—because Mr. Prue was a very formidable opponent.

I had always thought that my opportunity to run would be against the member from Toronto—Danforth. The member from Toronto—Danforth and I ran against each other 20 years ago in 1994 for city council. Let me say that it was a tremendous, spirited campaign. He went on and continued on in politics and I went on to be a consultant, but I enjoyed that opportunity, I enjoyed that exercise, immensely. It was a chance to meet all the neighbours of the area where I live in Toronto—Danforth, and it set me up for an opportunity to run this time against Mr. Prue, who, as I say, was a well-liked guy.

He was first elected in 1988 as a city councillor in the old borough of East York and went on to become the last mayor of East York, and then served in Toronto council as the councillor for the megacity after the cities were amalgamated. He had been an MPP here for the last 13 years.

He was a good retail politician. I repeatedly heard people say at the door, "I like Mr. Prue. He's helped me out. He's a good guy. I would vote for him." I had to convince them that I, too, was a good guy, and we had to see what our policies were, because the policy we were

running on, of course, was the budget, and the budget is what we have to debate here, and we have to get it passed. Now we're in a procedural motion in order to get this budget passed, which will keep us here from 6 o'clock until midnight in order to resolve the committee structures.

Having run, I was reminded of Stephen LeDrew the day after the election. Mr. LeDrew—I had the pleasure of running his mayoralty campaign when he ran against Mr. Miller for the mayor of Toronto many years ago. Mr. LeDrew was on TV at CP24. He interviewed me shortly after the election, and he asked me, “Were you shocked and as surprised as all of us at winning?” Frankly, I wasn't shocked and surprised, because on the street we heard very early on that the people of Beaches–East York were looking for change. We had already discovered—we'd had an inkling—that the NDP vote particularly was going to come to our side of the table, because they should have passed that budget. They should have passed the budget that we're debating today. It was a good budget. It was a progressive budget. It invested, as I said earlier, in transit and infrastructure. Now we find ourselves in this position of having to debate a procedural motion in order to bring in the budget that the people of Ontario clearly spoke in favour of adopting.

0930

Notwithstanding that the Leader of the Opposition has said publicly that it wasn't the budget that elected our government but it was the campaign that was run by the opposition parties, well, I tell you, in Beaches–East York that just wasn't the case. It was a two-person race. It was between me and Mr. Prue. There was a Conservative candidate and there was a Green candidate, and the other two candidates were just—well, there were a few others, the Marxist-Leninist Party and some others—but between them, they were simply going to split the vote. It was a two-horse race between Mr. Prue and myself, and who knows to whose benefit those vote splits would have gone?

The budget was the plan. It was a great piece of literature that I was able to go door to door and talk to people about. That is why I'm so confident that it's the budget that the people of Ontario want us to pass. They want us to get through this procedural wrangling. They want us to get past these petty squabbles about committee makeup and recognize the absolutely important principles that have been established in the past about representation on committees.

What allowed me to get elected was in fact a confluence of fairly significant events. There was a tremendous change sentiment in my riding. I had the unique opportunity of running for change in Beaches–East York, change both at the provincial level—because with Ms. Wynne we had a new leader of the party that was taking us in a very progressive direction. The budget signified a significant change from the way the party had established itself in the past. It did take us back to our progressive roots as a party that cared about people, that cared about public support workers, that cared about educators, a

party that cared about trying to fix the crumbling infrastructure that over the years had been falling apart. We needed to invest in this infrastructure. That's what the budget plan was telling us to do and that's what was helping us at the door.

But I also campaigned on change at the local level. As nice a guy as Mr. Prue was, he had been the finance critic for the NDP in the creation of the budget. He had gone across the province, door to door, at pre-budget hearings. He had helped fashion the budget that was ultimately put forward in this House on May 1. It was a surprise and a shock to all of us that his party did not support a budget that he helped craft. It was, as I say, progressive. I know that, door to door, people talked to Mr. Prue about that: “You should not have put the funding of Toronto East General Hospital in jeopardy. You should not have turned down increased wages for support workers, for educational workers, for working with people in homes that have children with autism.” These were important dimensions of the budget. More to the point, we were looking at a poverty reduction strategy based on the recommendations of the Lankin-Sheikh report.

Ms. Lankin also had been the representative for Beaches–East York. She's a tremendous asset to this province and continues to be so in the work she does advocating for the poor, advocating for policies of social justice. Our government had retained her and used her and Mr. Sheikh to develop some policies that we are getting so close to implementing.

With this budget, we can implement those policies, Mr. Speaker, and we very, very much look forward to doing so. We will do everything we need to do as a government. We will come here and we will work from 6 o'clock to midnight every night until we pass the budget that we promised the people of Ontario. That's what this procedural wrangling is all about. We want the members to recognize that the people have spoken.

Now, Ms. Lankin offered up her seat 13 years ago to Mr. Prue in a by-election; she had another opportunity to go to, and he won the seat in a by-election. I was shocked to know that Mr. Prue could not support the budget that implemented the recommendations of the person who gave up her seat so he could run and represent the people of Beaches–East York in this House. He did not support that budget. What I heard at the door repeatedly is that he should have supported the budget, and that had a lot to do with why he wasn't re-elected, notwithstanding that he is a fantastic guy. I've been drinking beer with him for 25 years, since I knew him at city hall. He's a great guy and he did some great things at city hall and in the province.

But Ms. Wynne had been an incredible asset for us going door-to-door in this campaign.

Interjection: Yes.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Absolutely, absolutely, and she continues to be.

I'm so honoured to be in this House, listening to her as she stands up and hears these same old questions coming back and forth, as if members of the parties opposite hadn't been listening during the course of the election.

The “Trojan Horse budget”: What are we talking about? This is not Greek history; this is all about getting a progressive plan moving forward, building the province up. This is very important.

She had been a great asset to my campaign because the messages of both the opposition parties simply didn’t resonate well in Beaches–East York, but we needn’t spend time on that messaging now. We need to focus more time on these procedural matters, and I’m happy to do so.

I also had the pleasure in my campaign of being in the midst of a three-way battle for the Liberal nomination in Beaches–East York for the federal party.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Highly sought-after now.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: He’ll throw you off.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Don’t throw me off. Just give me a chance to have glass of water. Much appreciated.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Sorry about that.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Not at all, not at all.

The federal nomination: We have three individuals who, for the last year and a half, have been working tirelessly to represent our area as Liberals in the federal Parliament, and they were able to bring all their resources—their teams, their volunteers—into our campaign. We had a chance to outreach into neighbourhoods we otherwise probably wouldn’t have got to as early as we did because they were there, so I was honoured to have their support.

More importantly, from a strategic basis, we had the support of Ms. Maria Minna, who was the federal member for 18 years in Beaches–East York, and only three years ago was defeated in the federal election. Ms. Minna is still thought of as the local representative. People in Beaches–East York continue to come to her, and I go to her. I go to her for assistance on procedural issues and how to manage issues like the procedural debate that we’re having today. She’s a great mentor and a great support to me in that process.

But probably one of the greatest assets we had in this campaign was the weather. I know all of you out there knocking on doors and campaigning would appreciate what a wonderful, wonderful late spring it was, with lots of sun and so very little rain. This allowed us to go door to door, to get to so many more doors than otherwise would have been possible. I envision trying to do this election campaign in the dark of winter. It just wouldn’t have been possible.

What was absolutely critical is that we heard from every single resident we could in Beaches–East York about what was important to them. What we did hear was that it was the budget, and I was able to explain the budget to them in a way that they understood. They wanted it passed. They wanted it adopted.

But most important for me was the hard work of our campaign team. They worked hard. Our volunteer numbers grew. There was tremendous energy in our campaign, and I wish to thank all of them for the immense contributions they made to getting me elected.

I think I ran a marathon almost every single day. I climbed the equivalent of the CN Tower probably one and a half or two times a day because Beaches–East York is blessed with a lot of hills. I would find myself rushing up to a door, knocking, leaving a flyer and running down, only to get to the bottom and discover the resident had just opened the door at the top again, and running back up. I had the pleasure during the course of the campaign—I lost weight; I got into great shape. It has improved my hockey game. I think it has improved my tennis game—

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It’s a win-win.

Mr. Arthur Potts: It’s a win-win all around.

As I said, I wasn’t expecting to win at first, but I was absolutely delighted. I thank very much the people of Beaches–East York for giving me this opportunity, because it’s important that they have a government spokesperson to speak to important issues like passing the budget motion—like the pleasure I felt in standing up and voting in the affirmative for the throne speech. That was a tremendous opportunity, my first vote. To be in the affirmative on your first vote is a great, great honour. I wish the members opposite would have had the opportunity to speak to the affirmative on that throne speech as well. There will be other opportunities and other good pieces of legislation coming forward, including this motion that’s in front of us today.

On election night, Mr. Speaker, if you’ll allow me just a little latitude here, I had the pleasure of sitting with my mother, my sister, my partner, Lisa, and our kids to watch the results. It was a see-saw battle back and forth. Mom, I remember you looking at me. Mom said to me, “Your father, when he ran in 1963 for the Liberals and again in 1967 for the Liberals”—in the area where we lived, which was south Rosedale, very much similar in many ways to Beaches–East York because it encompassed all the much poorer neighbourhoods south of Danforth, south of Bloor Street, and the more affluent neighbourhoods north of Danforth. My father ran, and it would be of interest to this House to know that in two successive provincial elections my father lost by the smallest margin of any member in the House: 220 and 285 votes. I think it was—two successive elections. There’s my dear mother, 86 years of age—

Interjection: Hello, Mother.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Hello, Mother—looking up at me with those very supportive eyes and saying, “Oh, my heavens. I hope this is not happening again.”

0940

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It didn’t.

Mr. Arthur Potts: And it didn’t.

I wanted to go down to the campaign office. My mother and my sisters and my kids—we were watching it at the house, because my campaign manager wanted to know what speech I was going to read when I went down to see the rest of the people. As you all know—and I know most of you have—you always have two speeches in the bag on election night. But it was a see-saw battle.

I love a good party—particularly one that I know has been thrown somewhat in my honour, but also to honour

the hard work of our campaign team—and I was chomping at the bit, Mr. Speaker, to go down to watch the results with my friends and family and the campaign workers, but they wouldn't let me go. My campaign manager was ruthless.

But, at about 11:30, she finally relented and she said, "Yes, you can come down." We went, and we watched and suffered together as the votes came in. Fortunately—well, unfortunately—at about 1 o'clock, I stood up to make a speech to say, "I'm sorry. It's time to go home. It's too close to call"—we won't know if I will come up and speak to procedural debate motions tonight—"There could be a recount in the morning."

As I was in the middle of making that speech, telling people to go home at 1:15 in the morning, they started to cheer, and they weren't listening to me—unlike members of the House today, who are listening very intently, I appreciate. They weren't listening, because we had just been declared the victors of Beaches–East York, and I was delighted for that opportunity.

Interjection: We're delighted, too.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Post-election, it has been just an absolute honour to be here, to participate in the debates, to introduce yesterday my first motion, the tipping bill, to honour Mr. Prue, who, as I say, is a good guy and was a good member here. I look forward to continuing and assisting the party in every way I can so that Premier Wynne can bring in a very worthy budget, a budget that she's worked hard with the finance minister to produce, a budget that builds Ontario up, a budget that invests in people and in infrastructure—that particularly will invest in infrastructure, I believe, in Beaches–East York, where Main and Danforth is in serious need of a lift. We can put a transit hub there, which can help connect TTC and GO and Via, and help lift up that neighbourhood, along with all of the neighbourhoods in Ontario.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the latitude that I like to think could be afforded, and I hope to do my maiden speech some day very soon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Yvan Baker: It's an honour to be standing up in the Legislature, speaking for the first time, at least for a protracted period of time.

I was told this morning that I was going to have the opportunity to deliver my maiden address, and I couldn't have thought, until today, of anything more important than my maiden address. But this is more important. This procedural motion is important, because it's really about whether we're going to continue to sit here and work and do what the people of Ontario sent us here to do, which is to get this budget passed.

Now, I have to say that when I was in my community canvassing throughout the campaign, I heard about a lot of issues. I heard a lot about the need to continue to create jobs, to build on our track record. I can say that, having been out in my community, there's a lot of support for the work that the government has done over the

past 11 years, since 2003, and a lot of progress has been made. We have created over 460,000 new jobs, but, at the same time, there are many people out there in the community who are struggling to find work.

I can tell you, for example, that I met a young woman when I was canvassing, who opened her door to me. I introduced myself, and I said, "I'm the candidate for Etobicoke Centre," and she said, "Well, tell me about your credentials." I told her a little bit about my background, that I'm a management consultant, that I teach at York University, that I have a finance background, that I have an MBA. She said, "You know, I also have an MBA," and she said, "I'm struggling to find work. Can you help?" We talked a lot about some of the things that the government has done to help her find work and some of the many more things that are in this budget that will help her do that. So when I think about some of those things, I think about the investments that we're making in infrastructure; I think about the things that we're doing to make post-secondary education more accessible; I think about the things that we're doing to make sure that we're attracting businesses here to Ontario, by keeping taxes low and regulations down. When I think about this motion, Mr. Speaker, I think about how important it is that we pass this motion so that we can get this budget passed, because when I think about this woman, I think about this budget and how important it is to her and how much she would want us to pass this budget expeditiously.

Some of the other things that I heard in the community were around health care. In my riding of Etobicoke Centre we have one of the largest percentages of seniors of any riding in the country, so we have a lot of folks in our community who rely on the health care system. Again, they appreciate the good work that we've done in a number of ways, in terms of improving access to care, expanding home care, long-term care. The investment that will be made in this budget to help raise pay for personal support workers is one of the things that is particularly important in my riding of Etobicoke Centre, because so many of my constituents rely on those personal support workers every single day. The quality of care and access to care is critical. When I think about this budget, I think about how important it is. Again, I urge the members here to pass this motion.

I heard a lot in my community about education and the quality of education. One of the things that they appreciated about our platform—and that platform was built from the budget—is the work that we're going to do to continue to keep class sizes down, the work that we're going to do to continue to invest in education for special-needs children, the things we're going to do to make sure that we continue to strengthen some of those core skills that young people need so they can get into university and succeed post-graduation.

As someone who teaches at a university, I know a little bit about and understand some of the challenges that young people face, very frankly. Some of those skills that I'm talking about are things like creative thinking, like math skills. Those types of skills are the kinds of things

that young people are going to need to succeed in the new economy.

I can tell you that when I teach at university I often help young students who are searching for work in the private sector. A lot of times they'll come to me or they'll send me an e-mail or they'll give me a call. I'll sit down with them over coffee and we'll talk about some of the challenges that they face in finding a job. I'll give them advice on anything from how to write their resumé to how to network and other things like that, and where they might be able to find employment and the kinds of careers that might be a fit for their skill set. One of the things I sometimes hear from young people is that they've graduated, they've earned a job, but they're not working in their particular field; they're struggling to find work in their particular field. That's one of the areas where I know we have work to do and that's one of the areas where our government is committed to continuing to do work, to make sure that young people have access to that quality education and that we continue to strengthen it.

So the math skills, the creative thinking skills that we're talking about in school are some of the things that are going to allow them to succeed and graduate. I look forward to seeing those students come through as they graduate through high school into university and into my class and are then able to therefore succeed and get those jobs that we're talking about.

Some of the other things that are important in this budget and in our platform were around expanding guidance programs for young people. I think one of the challenges that young people face, and I experience this every day in my work as a teacher, is that young people, in looking for work, sometimes just don't know how to look or where to look. That's an important element of this. So education is critical. There are other aspects to education that are important in this budget, but that's some of it. I would urge the members here to pass the motion so that we can get this budget passed. Because again, those young people, if we don't pass this budget expeditiously, are presumably going to turn to me and they're going to say, "What happened? You got elected on this platform."

Some of the other things that I heard in the community were around transportation and infrastructure. Transportation affects our daily life, whether it be our economy and how it supports growth in our economy or whether it be the quality of life that we enjoy. When I think about this morning, I was able to get on a bus quite quickly and get down here in a reasonable period of time, but there are many mornings where that's not necessarily the case for a lot of folks. Those are the kinds of things—transit and transportation—that we need to invest in, because they touch us every single day. We're doing that in this budget. So there's infrastructure spending that's been allocated, about \$130 billion. Of course, about \$15 billion of that is allocated to transportation within the GTA. That's one of the things that I think is so, so critical, that we show Ontarians—all members of this House, no mat-

ter what side of the aisle you're on—that we heard the people of Ontario. They voted overwhelmingly in support of this budget, overwhelmingly in support of this government's platform. So again, for the sake of my constituents in Etobicoke Centre who rely on transit, who want to continue to see gridlock relieved, that's the kind of thing I hope we take into consideration as we think about this motion.

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Another thing I heard at the doors a lot was the need to continue to manage our taxpayers' dollars wisely. I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to be working with Minister Matthews, who's President of the Treasury Board, as her parliamentary assistant. I think this is one of the issues that is so, so important—one of the issues that I heard about at the doors in my community. I've been working with Minister Matthews, and it's a true honour to work with her, but I look forward to working with her more in the weeks and months to come as we make sure that we get maximum value for taxpayers' dollars.

My background is in management consulting so I do this type of work for private sector clients on a regular basis. We'll be asked to come in and identify opportunities to find more value for the dollar. That's one of the things I'm looking forward to working on with Minister Matthews.

Mr. Speaker, as I think about this motion, it's something that would send a strong message to my community, to other communities across the province, that, as legislators who have been recently elected, many of us here for the first time, we're really committed to moving ahead with the agenda that Ontarians endorsed.

One of the things that I think is incredibly important as part of this is the fact that this budget has a 10-year economic plan. One of the things that it does is it helps us compete better for global investments. To help secure these investments, we're going to maintain, as I said earlier, a competitive tax system. We're going to work on reducing energy costs for business, and cutting red tape. We're creating a new Jobs and Prosperity Fund, which is critical. It's a really important strategic tool, I believe, to attract businesses to our province.

I also think that lowering energy costs is something we hear from both sides of the House on a regular basis as an issue that's important in our communities. Again, we're introducing a new five-point energy plan to give small and medium-sized businesses the tools they need to conserve energy, which I think is also critical. I have a lot of people in my community who are business owners; I have a lot of people in my community who are entrepreneurs. These types of things are critical to them, and I heard about them during the election campaign.

One of the things that's also important—and I mentioned this a little bit earlier, but I think one of the things I heard in the community was that they want us to continue with the track record of investment in infrastructure, particularly in transportation. Like I said, since 2003 we've invested about \$100 billion in hospitals, schools and other infrastructure, and I think we need to continue with that.

One of the things that's also important is that we continue to increase support for those who are most vulnerable. There are many people in my community who rely on support, and we need to continue to do that. One of the things in the budget is that we'll be increasing the maximum annual OCB per child to \$1,310. That's going to enhance the incomes of about half a million families. We're also expanding low-income health benefits and developing a new program to reduce electricity bills for low-income Ontarians. We're also going to increase social assistance benefits and expand the student nutrition program so that more children in school have access to a healthy, balanced breakfast to start the day. We continue to make steady increases in the minimum wage, which, again, is a critical element of the budget and critical to supporting those who are more vulnerable.

As I mentioned earlier, one of the things that I heard at the doors—many members of my community are seniors, as I mentioned, but many members of the community in Etobicoke Centre are also part of that so-called sandwich generation. They are middle-aged families who are in a position where they're caring for their elderly parents but they're also caring for their children. One of the things that I'm proud of in this budget is that we're continuing to take the steps to make sure that we try to help these families as much as possible—not just help the seniors by helping them in terms of improving the quality of care and access to care, but by helping the families that are bearing the burden of caring for them.

I can tell you that my mother cared for my grandmother for many, many years, and her ability to do that was unique. She was fortunate enough to have the flexibility and the financial resources to do so, but not all families are able to do that. Continued support, particularly through home care, is critical but other forms of care as well. We've committed to continue to work in that area.

It's interesting. My family was actually supposed to be here as well and, unfortunately, they weren't here, but I know that if they were, my mother would certainly be supportive of the kind of work that we're doing in this budget. She's an example, but there are many people in my community of Etobicoke Centre who are examples of folks who really need that support.

When I think about some of the things we're doing in health care—wait times, for example. Since 2003, we're now best in Canada for surgical wait times. We've invested \$1.7 billion to fund over three million more medical procedures. We used to have the longest wait times in the country. Now we have the shortest, and we're going to continue that good work.

I know one of the priorities that I heard a lot about from seniors, from families, frankly, in Etobicoke Centre, was how important it is to make sure that we're providing access to doctors and faster access to doctors. A lot of folks need specialist care particularly. So one of the things that we've committed to in our platform and, through that, in the budget is to continue to work in that area, to make sure people have access to specialist care.

I can tell you that a lot of my constituents have raised this issue. They appreciate the progress that has been made. Many do appreciate the progress that has been made, but there's so much more work to do. I think we on both sides of this House would all agree to that. That's another issue.

One of the things that I'd like to highlight also is the issue of mental health. Mental health is an issue that we're going to continue to hear more and more about, and rightly so, because the growing challenge for us. Of course, since 2003, we launched a comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy focused on children and youth in the first three years. That's helping 50,000 more kids and their families access the supports they need. We've hired more than 770 new mental health workers in schools and community, which has already helped 35,000 kids and their families. We've added 5,000 more doctors. We've hired about 20,000 more nurses since 2003. Again, these are the kinds of accomplishments and this is the kind of track record that I think people in a community, like mine, where health care is an important issue, value, and they'd like to see it continue.

When I think about this budget and what's in this budget for health care, I think about the increasing community services funding by 4% over the next three years, increasing front-line care by increasing the wages of PSWs—we talked about that—and maintaining critical repairs in-hospital to provide better high-quality health care to patients. We're providing funding of almost \$700 million over the next 10 years for that.

These are the kinds of things that are going to impact people on the ground, and these are the kinds of things that, frankly, Ontarians voted for when they elected us to this Legislature. I would urge members on both sides to support this procedural motion and, supporting that, help us debate this budget and move it along.

Now, if I may, I'd like to just briefly talk about education. When we think about the progress that has been made in education, it's the kind of thing we need to continue and we plan to continue through this budget. We've committed to continue these investments in education. Test scores are up. Graduation rates are up. The graduation rate in 2003 in Ontario was in the high 60% range, about 68%. Now we're in the low 80% range, and I think that's something we can celebrate. That's not to say that there isn't more work to be done. There is more work to be done. That's, in fact, why we need to continue that work and why we need to pass this budget.

We brought in full-day kindergarten, which of course gives kids the best start in education. Study after study that I've read has shown the value of early childhood education on outcomes later in life. Earlier in my remarks, I was talking about the importance of math skills and critical thinking skills in high schools. Well, this is another example of the kinds of investments that we're making strategically to strengthen our education system and make sure that young people have the skills they need, so that when they do work their way through the system, and for those who choose to pursue graduate

studies and university studies and those who move on to the trades or other forms of work, that they have the fundamental skills they need to succeed. I think these are critically important. So full-day kindergarten is critical.

We've invested \$4 billion in 23 major post-secondary expansion projects and have added 161,000 student spaces. When I think about student assistance, 370,000 students receive \$1 billion annually, and our post-secondary attainment is the highest in the OECD—almost double the average. Again, as I was referring to earlier, there are individuals, certainly, who face challenges graduating, but the overwhelming majority do have access to higher education and are able to succeed and move on into their careers and prosper as a result.

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When I think about some of the other things we've done in education—I'm a management consultant. I used to work for a company called the Boston Consulting Group. There's a company, a competitor, called McKinsey and Company. They had a chance to appraise our education system and they said that we are one of the world's most improved school systems and we keep getting better. That's an endorsement, if I've ever heard one, of the kinds of things we've done in education, and we certainly want that work to continue. Minister Sandals has been doing excellent work and we want that work to continue. So it's important that we move this budget along and get it passed, and I would urge the members to pass this procedural motion.

As someone who has a finance background, a business background, and someone who spends a lot of time thinking about how we can grow our economy and how companies can maximize growth in our economy, I'm particularly proud of our attainment in terms of economic growth. We're third in North America now for foreign direct investment. Forbes named Ontario the top destination for foreign direct investment in North America. Foreign direct investment is a critical measure of success because it means we're outcompeting other jurisdictions for investment, that we're a more attractive jurisdiction to do business in. That's a compliment to the people of Ontario, because they're highly educated, they're hard-working and they have a lot to contribute. I think we want that work to continue, Mr. Speaker.

We have the second-largest financial services industry in North America. I happened to work in financial services for some time. I think this is an area that offers tremendous opportunity, and we need to continue to ensure that that's the case.

We're first in Canada—a major player—in mining. I know that's an issue not just in my community but particularly for our communities to the north. That's a track record we want to build on.

So as I think about this budget and I think about the things we're doing—we're investing in infrastructure, we're investing in education, we're investing in people, we're keeping taxes down, we're keeping regulations low—these are the kinds of things that are going to continue to grow our economy. We're going to continue

to invest in education, and through those investments we're going to be able to ensure we continue to strengthen our education system and prepare our young people for the jobs of tomorrow. The other investments that we're making in many other areas are critical, but we're going to do all this while managing taxpayer dollars wisely. That is so, so important.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge the members to pass the motion before us.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the member from Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Good morning. It's a pleasure for me to speak to the government's motion that would consider this sitting an extension of the spring sitting. I think the government House leader has talked about why he felt that he needed to do this and the fact that this sets the table for possible night sittings.

I want at the start, before I make my argument, to say how very proud I was that our interim leader, Jim Wilson, has given me the opportunity to sit in this role as House leader for the official opposition. I had the opportunity to serve as Mr. Wilson's deputy when he was the House leader. I actually find that the House leaders' meetings are quite fascinating. Periodically it's mentioned in the House that, "This matter was referred to the House leaders," or, "This matter is a decision of the three House leaders." It almost makes it like it's this mystical committee that meets every week and makes decisions.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: A good lunch.

Mr. Steve Clark: Well, the member notes publicly that he provides a nice lunch. In fact, the first meeting that I sat on as the opposition House leader, we sat, and I know that the government House leader would have preferred the meetings to be kept confidential and that the contents wouldn't be discussed in the media. I have to admit that I did talk about my frustration when it came to setting committees. But I do want to publicly state a couple of points that I made in that first meeting.

One of the first things—in fact, the first thing—that I said was that it certainly wasn't our intention as an opposition to unduly hold up the budget. I felt, based on the amount of sitting days that we had in July, that we should have been able to come to an agreement to have the budget go through the normal process and not unduly delay the Legislature.

I also brought up a couple of issues from the last session of Parliament. The issue of the Select Committee on Developmental Services, which, as you know, was within a whisker—probably all they needed was to hit "print" to have the committee report printed. This was a committee made up of all the three parties. It was a consensus committee where all of the groups represented from all the parties sat, had hearings and made recommendations. I felt that that report should be tabled in the Legislature without having to be delayed by the establishment of the committees.

I also felt that the report from the public accounts committee, the Ornge report—again, all it needed was for the committee to convene and ultimately the report

would have been received and referred to the House. I didn't feel that that report should be unduly delayed as well.

But what happens in House leaders'—it's a very interesting dynamic when issues come up, because when I bring these issues up, the parties sometimes will say, "Do you know what? That's a very interesting point. We'll think about that. We'll talk about that next week," meaning that there will be a decision next week. But you know what? What happens sometimes is, the other party may say, "We did discuss it. Maybe we should defer that to the following week."

So you have this—I call it an interesting dynamic, for lack of a better word. People think we make these decisions, that we sit and make decisions. I have to tell you—I'm sure you can hear it in my voice—it's a bit frustrating to sit with the other two parties when I do see that, in the minority Parliament, albeit it was a rough ride in some cases for the government, there were some things that we were able to move forward, like the Select Committee on Developmental Services.

I wanted to put those on the record just at the start, as the opposition House leader, because it's not this milk-and-honey committee where we all seem to get together and agree with each other on the rules of the House. In fact, if you read some of the words in the throne speech, you'll realize, I think, what the government intends to do. I'm referring to the justice committee and the fact that there were witnesses that were to appear the week after the House ultimately dissolved for the election. The words in the throne speech were, "Let the justice committee write its report." I think that that was something that struck me.

We're here because—the government mentioned committees this morning. We're at odds, between the opposition and the government, on the composition of the standing committees here at Queen's Park. Again, the government House leader indicates that it's holding up the passing of the budget, a budget that, I had indicated at our first House leaders' meeting, I didn't want to unduly delay.

We believe that the standing orders—and the government House leader is using the standing orders today as the reason for the debate. I think the standing orders are very clear. In fact, the standing order that we're putting on the table regarding committees is standing order 113(a), which says, "No standing or select committee shall consist of more than nine members and the membership of such committees shall be in proportion to the representation of the recognized parties in the House," whereas the government believes that they should have an absolute majority. I think you heard the government House leader this morning, Speaker, talk about the Chair being separate from that. That's certainly not what I read in the standing orders. It was reinforced by the Clerks. I apologize that I somehow dragged the Clerks into it by referencing them in my letter that I brought forward.

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It is what it is, and I used the information that I had to make the decision based on the seats that the government

and the opposition parties had at the end of the election. As we all know, the government had 58 seats, we had 28 and the NDP had 21. If you use that in a percentage format, it works out to 54.21%, 26.17% and 19.63%. You apply that to standing order 113(a) about the nine-member committee, and it works out, as I said in question period last week, to five members for the government, two members for the Progressive Conservatives and two members for the NDP.

In every committee I've ever been on, Speaker—and I've been on committees since I was in my 20s—in every nine-person committee I was on, in every single one, without fail, five outvotes four every time. I can't say it any clearer than that. I've never been on a committee where four members have outvoted five members. Maybe I'm wrong; maybe I just haven't run in the same circles as the government House leader, but it seems to me pretty easy and democratic.

The government continues to argue that the impartial Chair cannot be factored into the equation, and they want the committees to be struck as six, two and one. It's going to ensure that they have five voting members, no matter who is in the chair. I disagree, because I again go back to the standing orders. To me, based on the standing orders, if you want six seats on the committee, you're going to need 68 or 71 seats. Maybe between your seats and their seats, that gets you your 68 or 71; I don't know if that's what you're thinking. If you look at 2003 to 2007, the government attained those percentages; they had the six seats. I was elected in a by-election in 2010, and that certainly was the case on the committee I was on, the general government committee. That was a committee that was comprised like that.

Again, there were some times, like 2011, that that didn't happen, when the minority Parliament—in that case, the government had the minority of members, and we—in terms of "we," I'm using "we" as the opposition—had the majority. Again, the dynamic was different, depending on who was in the chair. When we were in the chair, you had that dynamic where the Chair allowed the debate to continue. In fact, if you look at what was able to be accomplished during the minority Parliament, I think there were some great things that happened under that committee structure.

In fact, I still don't understand—I still believe quite firmly that if the government adhered to my suggestions, the Legislature wouldn't grind to a halt. The Legislature would not impede the government legislation to the degree that perhaps some of the members opposite would suggest. I happen to think, using our existing standing order 113(a), that we'd be able to work it out, just like we worked it out in the minority Parliament situation. I've never been told by the government House leader that under that suggestion—

Interjections.

Mr. Steve Clark: They can laugh all they want, but I guess I came from a different place before I was elected here. I happen to believe that we can rise to a different standard in House leaders, that we can have some discus-

sions and make some decisions without having to kick the can down the road every single, solitary—

Interjection.

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm going to keep going, Speaker, so if you need to adjourn the House, I can come back this afternoon and finish my few moments of speech. It's not a problem, Speaker.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): It being 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, we have three interns who are with us today from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to monitor question period: Liam Nichols, Victoria Favret and Alexandra Sherwin.

I just want to make note that today is the 10th anniversary of the great Peterborough flood of July 15, 2004.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I have the honour of introducing the family of page captain Matthew Lynn. We have his mother, Jeannel Lynn, and father, Robert Lynn, and they're both constituents of mine in Etobicoke Centre; aunts Elizabeth and Jennifer Lynn; his great-aunt Betty Lynn; and his cousin Alexandra Lynn. Welcome.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I want to add something to the Lynn family. Although they are in Etobicoke Centre, a large contingent is from Kitchener Centre, so I want the Kitchener people to give us a wave—thank you.

I also mention that Matthew Lynn was very excited to serve when he heard he would be doing this in May, but was very disappointed when the writ was dropped and we were into an election. However, on hearing that we were back at it this summer, although the members may not be too happy to be here, I will tell you that the pages are very excited to be back serving, so thank you.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I am delighted to welcome Michael and Maggie Donolo, who are here watching their sister Annie Donolo, who is my legislative assistant, at work.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce people who are on their way at the present time: Councillor Bruce Williamson of city council in St. Catharines, along with his son Glen Williamson, and a friend, Malcolm Cavanagh, who will be here with us shortly in the members' gallery.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Jim Wilson: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Premier, the direction that you chose to take with this budget is one that obviously the PC Party fundamentally disagrees with. It's obvious in how you ignore Ontario's massive debt, high unemployment and

credit rating warnings that balancing the budget is not a priority for you. The fact that you have no detailed plan to reduce costs is more proof that you're just not serious.

But the day of reckoning is going to come when Ontario's lenders tell you that Ontario's credit card has maxed out. Premier, how high are Ontario's borrowing costs going to get before you tell Ontario's bankers how you're going to balance the budget?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm sure that the Leader of the Opposition just neglected to mention that the Dominion Bond Rating Service today has confirmed our rating and our outlook, and according to—

Applause.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: That's right. According to DBRS, the trend on all ratings remains stable, supported by five consecutive years of lower-than-expected deficits.

I would suggest to the member opposite that, yes, we do have a fundamental disagreement with them about what the future should hold for the people of the province of Ontario. What we believe the future should hold is a thriving economy, bolstered by and supported by a government that understands that investments are important, community by community, whether they're in the education of the children and the grandchildren of those communities or whether they're in their transportation infrastructure.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Premier, you often talk about building Ontario up, but the only thing that you're building up is a tremendous debt load for future generations. If you won't tell us where you're going to cut, then will you at least tell Ontarians where you're going to raise their taxes? Because it's being said that you can't have an activist agenda without raising taxes.

So where will those next tax increases be? Premier, are you planning on raising land transfer taxes for home-buyers? Are you planning on raising eco fees or the cost of vehicle registration? Will you raise the gas tax? Which Ontarians are you going to hit the hardest with your inevitable tax increases?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: If the Leader of the Opposition would read the budget, he would see exactly where those decision points are, Mr. Speaker. It's very clear that we have laid out the investments we are proposing, but we've also addressed the revenue side of the ledger.

We've made it clear that we are going to ask the top 2% of earners in the province to pay a little bit more. We've said that we are going to make sure that the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario are working as hard as they can and that their value is optimized for the people of the province.

We've made those decisions; they're all laid out in the budget. I know that the Leader of the Opposition will take a second look so he can see those measures in place.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Premier, you have not been honest with the people of Ontario. You have no detailed plan to

balance the books within the next three years. Despite what Dominion Bond Rating has said, Moody's and others—Standard and Poor's has you on a watch list. Moody's has you on a negative outlook.

Your borrowing costs are going to go up. You're going to have to touch front-line services. In fact, in an unguarded moment yesterday, you did say, "We will cut where we must." Even Smokey Thomas, head of OPSEU, called you out yesterday when he said, "With what they're promising to spend and how they're promising to control costs, the public service can only shrink."

All we're asking, Premier, is for you to be honest. You've already fired nurses in Windsor. You've fired nurses and teachers in North Bay. You've cut physiotherapy services so that they're a disgrace now for our seniors, particularly seniors in retirement homes. What further front-line services are you going to cut? Just be honest with the people of Ontario.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think the member opposite knows that there are 20,000 more nurses in Ontario today than there were in 2003, Mr. Speaker.

I'm just going to quote from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. Allan O'Dette, who is their CEO, says, "I think the budget strikes a good degree of balance.... We recognize the significance of having the pension funds available for that cohort of Ontarians that are going to need it."

What our budget does is invest in the transit that we know is needed in communities in our urban and suburban centres and also in our rural and northern communities, because roads and bridges and transit are all part of that infrastructure that's necessary, as well as hospitals and schools that we know are necessary for future prosperity.

We're going to invest in the education of our people, of the children and the grandchildren who are going to be the job creators of the future. We're going to set up an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan because we know that people are not able to save enough, and they need that security in their retirement.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm just going to ask everyone to settle down.

New question.

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. Minister, your ministry recently outlined plans to levy a number of additional fees on hunters and anglers: for instance, your plan—and this is for the first time ever—to require seniors to pay for fishing licences, something they've long been exempted from.

This comes after the ministry reported that the special purpose account, which is funded by licence fees and is required to be used for purposes of managing Ontario's fish and wildlife resources, increased by 31% from 2010 to 2011.

Yet just last year, the MNR announced layoffs and reductions that prompted the Environmental Commissioner to state, "It appears that the Ministry of Natural Resources is walking away from many parts of its job to safeguard wildlife and natural resources."

Minister, how can you justify levying additional fees when your revenues are up and, according to the province's environmental watchdog, you're doing less work?

Hon. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member for the question. What I would begin by saying is that what's occurring within the ministry today is no different than what has been going on for a very long time.

The member will know that the special purpose account has been around for a very long time. The percentage of money that flows into that account is approximately 66% from users and approximately 33% from the CRF.

On a go-forward basis, there's an acknowledgement that there are challenges with the SPA. They're concerned about the revenue side in terms of the revenue that will flow in there. This is being witnessed right across the country. It makes complete sense to everybody that there should be a review of the account. That's what has occurred. No final decisions have been made. It has been posted on the registry. The results are internal, and at some point in the near future we'll be making a decision. Nothing has been decided at this point.

1040

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Back to the minister: Minister, I'd like to ask you more about recent figures for the account, but your ministry has not released the annual report for the special purpose account for the last two years. I have the 2010-11 report sitting on my desk; it's 10 pages long, with little to zero detail. I was told by your office that I have to wait until this fall to get the 2011-12 report and then another year for the 2012-13 report. Minister, you're asking hunters and anglers of this province to pony up more money, but you can't even produce a 10-page report about where the money goes until two years after it's relevant.

Minister, with the Environmental Commissioner observing a decrease in your resource management activities and your lack of transparency when it comes to reporting the state of the special purpose account, how can you expect hunters and anglers in this province just to give you more money?

Hon. Bill Mauro: To repeat, we haven't done that yet. The posting is on the EBR. No final decisions have yet been made.

I would give the member one example of what has been done very recently in the ministry when it comes to the sustainability of the fish and wildlife sector in the province of Ontario. We just committed—I think the number was about \$5 million—for the moose aerial inventory in several wildlife management units in north-western Ontario. That was key and instrumental in maintaining the sustainability of the moose inventory in the province of Ontario.

What that investment found was that, in fact, moose numbers had significantly declined. There is serious concern about what's going on with moose inventory in Ontario. It was that investment of money, some of which comes from the SPA that the member is speaking to today, that is going to infuse our future decision- and policy-making on a go-forward basis. It's necessary. If we're serious about maintaining fish and wildlife in the province of Ontario, we need to have the means to do that. This is one of the means. No final decisions have been made just yet.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Minister, if you were serious about being open and transparent, we'd have the details of the SPA fund in our hands today.

In addition to your ministry delivering its SPA report two years after the fact, there is no detail on how the money is spent. I'm concerned that you, like the rest of your government, feel it's okay to continue to ask Ontarians to pay more without being fully accountable. Hunters and anglers are not able to see where their money goes, and yet you want to levy them with additional fees.

Minister, your government has overspent for years and now Ontario faces a \$12.5-billion deficit and a possible credit downgrade. Is levying more fees on hunters, fishers and our seniors your strategy to balance the budget?

Hon. Bill Mauro: Once again, the same question—three times. As I've mentioned to the member already, no final decisions have been made on what will be done with the SPA. Everything is on the table. The process, the consultation, was posted on the EBR, I think sometime in April. It was there for 45 days. All of the responses are now in-house, and in the near future we will be making decisions on what we will do.

I will say to the member again: If we are serious about maintaining, in a sustainable fashion, fish and wildlife populations in the province of Ontario, we need to have the means to do that. I am not giving the member my position on this. I'm simply saying that, as a government, we all know that we need to have the means with which to do this. The SPA is one of the means—66% has traditionally come from the SPA; 33% has traditionally come from the CRF. We will make decisions in the near future. We will communicate those decisions to my critic. Again, today, I thank him for the questions, restating: No final decisions have been made as of yet.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. New Democrats have been calling this a Trojan Horse budget because it looks like one thing, but inside are all kinds of surprises that the Liberals would rather keep hidden.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs will withdraw.

Hon. David Zimmer: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Please ask your question.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It looks like one thing, but inside are all sorts of surprises that the Liberals would want to keep hidden.

In fact, the Globe and Mail says, in black and white, that there is a major gap between the "government's rhetoric surrounding the budget and the actual budget." They say: "The actual budget ... is an austerity budget."

The Liberals' plan says that there is going to be \$3.15 billion that's coming from the sale of public assets, but the Premier won't even say those words. Why won't the Premier come clean with her plan to sell off public assets like the LCBO, the OPG and Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: That plan that the leader of the third party is talking about doesn't exist. The fact is that we have asked Ed Clark, who is the retiring CEO of the Toronto-Dominion Bank, to look at the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario. We've asked him to make sure that those assets are producing the highest return for the people of Ontario, because we believe that assets that were purchased and created and have worked for a number of years—that the money that we can realize from those should be reinvested, that those dollars should be reinvested in services and in assets for the future.

So, yes, we will sell real estate, Mr. Speaker. We will sell the LCBO headquarters. We've talked about that, and we will do that. But in terms of the other assets, that's an ongoing process—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, I don't know how the Liberals plan to find \$3.15 billion. If their budget says they're going to do it by selling off assets and the Premier says they're not, who knows, really, what the Liberals are up to in the province of Ontario?

Another thing that is hidden in the Liberal budget is massive cuts. One editorial in the National Post said that the Liberal Party "is not being straight with citizens when it maps out its plan for the next few years." Page 6 of the budget speech says the Liberals will "continue to cut." Will the Premier come clean with her plan on cuts and tell Ontarians exactly what's on the Liberal chopping block, Speaker?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, let me just frame this answer by saying to the leader of the third party that we recognize that there are challenges that we are confronting as a province. We recognize that there is a fiscal challenge ahead of us, and our budget addresses that and it addresses the need for investments right now to make sure that the economy can thrive. Those two things can exist, and do exist, side by side in our budget.

I understand that the leader of the third party wants a simplistic analysis of the situation in Ontario, because

simplistic is easier for her to talk about. But, Mr. Speaker, the reality is that it is complex. There are competing priorities, and we have to address them both. That's what our budget does, Mr. Speaker, and the investments that we are committed to are a very important part of that future economic growth.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What New Democrats are looking for is the truth. What exactly exists in that budget that is going to get this government the cuts that they want? That's what we're asking.

It's apparent that some of the cuts are going to be coming from public services. Ontarians just voted against firing 100,000 people, but Don Drummond says that the Liberal plan could mean 100,000 job cuts. Bloomberg News said the budget could mean the deepest cuts since Mike Harris, and yesterday the finance minister stubbornly refused to answer questions about how many public service jobs the Liberals will, in fact, cut. So I guess it's one more thing that's hidden in the Trojan Horse budget, Speaker.

Will the Premier give the people of Ontario a straight answer on how many nurses, firefighters, paramedics, early childhood educators and so many other public service workers are going to be fired in the province of Ontario under their plan?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The remarkable thing about this line of questioning is that the leader of the third party based her—albeit disjointed and disparate—platform on our fiscal plan. She used our fiscal plan as the foundation and then said she would go \$600 million more in terms of reductions, Mr. Speaker.

So here's the thing: Our plan deals with the fiscal reality and lays out a path to balance by 2017-18, which she agreed with when she put together her list of platform items. But our plan also invests in the people of this province, invests in the schools and the hospitals that we know we need, invests in and sets up a made-in-Ontario retirement pension plan, increases the Ontario Child Benefit, increases social assistance benefits. All of those things, Mr. Speaker, are things that I would have thought that the NDP would have supported.

1050

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier. One of the things she forgets—like Liberals love to do: tell half the story—is that our plan included significant revenues, which they don't have, which is why they're making cuts and selling assets. Scratch the surface of this Trojan Horse plan and you'll find a plan that leaves Bay Street better off, but it leaves folks on Main Street out of work and out of pocket.

Last month, 34,000 Ontarians lost a job, and this is what the Premier had to say about the manufacturing sector in our province: "Believe it or not, a lot has changed in Ontario since 1976." One thing that clearly

has not changed is Liberal arrogance, and it showed in spades yesterday.

Is the Premier's plan to abandon manufacturing once and for all in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, what I'm not doing is burying my head in the sand and saying, "I wish it were 1976." We're not doing that. Even though I was way younger in 1976, I do not think that it is responsible for the government to say, "We wish it was like that again."

The fact is, time has moved on. We are in a global economy. We're in a global competition. If we don't work with businesses to help them to upgrade so that they're able to compete, if we don't play to our strengths in the auto sector and in aerospace and in agri-food and help those businesses to be competitive and invest in the new high-tech industries of the future, if we don't do that, we can wish all we want that it was 1976, but it's not going to be, and we will not have the bright future that we want to create—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Mr. Speaker, what I would suggest is that it's not responsible to sit by and watch 300,000 manufacturing jobs—good manufacturing jobs—walk out of this province with no plan whatsoever to stem it.

Yesterday, the Premier insisted she has a jobs plan for 2014, but it's the same jobs plan that put Ontario's unemployment rate above the national average in 2007 and it's the same plan that put Ontario's unemployment rate above the national average in 2008 and in 2009 and 2010 and 2011 and 2012 and 2013. The Premier's plan for jobs in 2014 is more no-strings-attached giveaways. It hasn't worked for years. Why does the Premier think it's going to work now all of a sudden?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The work that we have done over the last number of years—and all of those years that the leader of the third party speaks of are years that are since the economic downturn. The reality is that there are parts of this province, including the parts of the province with a high manufacturing sector, that were hit very hard.

I said on London radio this morning that there are parts of southwestern Ontario that were hit extremely hard because of their reliance on manufacturing. It is our responsibility as a government to make sure that we make the investments and work with those communities so that that manufacturing sector can be competitive with all of the global jurisdictions. It is our responsibility to recognize that we have to have a strategy that acknowledges the realities of 2014. That's how we've managed to create and foster more than 460,000 net new jobs since the economic downturn.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm hopeful about Ontario's future. But the Premier seems to think that good manu-

facturing jobs are a relic of the 1970s. I'm hopeful about jobs as well, Speaker. I am hopeful about jobs, but when 34,000 Ontarians lost a job last month, our manufacturing sector hit nearly a 40-year low in terms of jobs. When our unemployment rate is stubbornly stuck above the national average for years and years on end, can the Premier explain to Ontarians exactly how her plan, which hasn't worked for years, is somehow going to start working today?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The recovery that has been in place and the 460,000 net new jobs that have been created in Ontario since the economic downturn, I think, are evidence that, although there is a fragility to that recovery, there is a recovery. We are coming back, Mr. Speaker. But now is not the moment to talk Ontario down; now is the moment to support the communities, to support the businesses in this province, to partner with them, to build the infrastructure that is necessary, that they need in order to be able to move their goods around and that their employees need in order to be able to move around the province. Now is the moment that those investments are important.

That's why our budget is crafted the way it is: with up-front investment in those things that are necessary to help the economy thrive, and a recognition that, at the same time, we need to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18.

There's no either/or there; we have to do both. That's what our budget lays out, Mr. Speaker.

APPLE INDUSTRY

Mr. Bill Walker: Speaker, through you to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs: Minister, as you're aware, the apple growers in my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and across Ontario have faced challenging times in the last few years. However, they are looking forward to moving forward to rejuvenate their \$60-million-strong sector. Specifically, they want your help in facilitating a revitalization plan so they can plant new varieties of apples which produce higher yields.

Implementing Ontario's own apple revitalization plan would ensure we're sustaining and enhancing a key aspect of our agricultural sector across the province, and specifically in the riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and the southern Georgian Bay area, which represent a quarter of the province's apple production.

Minister, my question to you: What are you prepared to do to revitalize and rebuild Ontario's apple industry?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. He did provide me with a detailed letter yesterday on this very important issue. My ministry now has commenced a review of this letter. It would be my commitment to get back to the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound as quickly as possible.

We do know that the apple industry is a crucial part of Ontario's agri-food business. Just a week ago, I had the opportunity to be fielding phone calls; a former colleague, Bill Murdoch, has Rock N Talk with Bill

Murdoch, a phone-in show. I spent an hour on that show, and there were very detailed questions about the apple sector and other sectors of the agri-food economy in that member's riding.

As I said, I make a commitment to that member to get back to him as quickly as possible on this very important issue.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bill Walker: Again to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs: As you're aware, we have a big opportunity to grow Ontario's apple industry so that we're able to produce enough apples to supply the market, to increase our export prospects and to create jobs while strengthening this important agricultural partner. That your budget commits \$40 million to food processing but commits none to food growers is disappointing and a bit perplexing.

Minister, will you commit to utilizing a portion of the \$40 million to facilitate the development of Ontario's own apple revitalization plan and be a champion for Ontario's apple industry?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member for his supplementary. He did make a very positive suggestion, and we'll certainly follow up on that.

Mr. Speaker, later this year, the Premier and our minister of trade will be going on a trade mission to China. That will be a perfect opportunity to talk about the great food that's grown in Ontario, to look at new markets for such things as apples that are grown in Ontario; that will be a great opportunity to do that.

I want to thank the member for his question and I want to commend all members of this House to get to your local farmers' market and buy those Ontario apples—second to none.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Here are the facts of your so-called progressive budget: Program spending is flatlined for three years between 2014-15 and 2017-18, but given inflation and the growing population, that's essentially a plan to cut spending by 3% each year. That's a 9% cut in real terms in program spending over three years. You didn't talk about that during the election. Even the Globe and Mail calls this budget for what it is: It is an austerity budget.

Will the Premier finally admit that a budget that cuts real program spending by 9% is anything but progressive? It is an austerity budget, pure and simple.

Hon. Charles Sousa: It was a real pleasure yesterday to reintroduce the budget that is progressive, that is positive, that does balance the books by 2017-18 and looks after the best interests of the people of our province—people of the province who have, in fact, reviewed the budget over the last 60 days and have endorsed exactly the plan that we're putting forward, and it's a 10-year plan.

We recognize the challenges that we face. That is why we have taken all the essential, necessary steps to re-

calibrate our spending where necessary, and we will cut where we can. We will invest where we must, because that is what's going to enable us to succeed in the future for the benefit of our children and our grandchildren, so that we do not pass the burden of debt on to future generations.

1100

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: As I was saying, this is an austerity budget. And it gets worse, because that 9% real cut to programs and services is going to cut far deeper in some areas than in others. This budget will hurt the people of this province, and you know it. Everyone in this House actually knows it.

We're talking about a potential 10% cut or more in programs and services that everyday folks depend upon. But this government won't come clean with the public and tell us where the cuts are going to fall.

Will this government finally admit that its so-called progressive budget is truly a Trojan Horse budget, and will it tell us where those 9% cuts are going to happen, where it's going to hurt the people of this province, and how you are actually going to balance this budget?

Hon. Charles Sousa: We are making the necessary investments. We are doing what the people of Ontario and their priorities have brought to us, because we took over 600,000 submissions in preparing this budget and this plan. We are continuing to do what is necessary to provide a jobs fund to enable more jobs and more investment in our province. We are the top jurisdiction in North America for foreign direct investment, surpassing California, Texas, New York and every other province in Canada.

But this is what the member opposite has voted against in terms of the progressive nature of this budget. She voted against a made-in-Ontario pension plan. She voted against increasing the Ontario Child Benefit. She voted against increasing social assistance benefits. She voted against increasing employment benefits, and \$810 million for adults with developmental disabilities. She voted against low-income health benefits and much more for our young people and personal support workers.

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. Todd Smith: My question this morning is for the Premier. Premier, just after the Easter weekend in April, you visited the flood-affected areas in Belleville only to let people there know that you had no immediate assistance to provide either to the municipality or to homeowners. One of the residents on River Road, Derrick Swoffer, actually said that you could visit his property as long as you did something about it. Three months later, here we are, and the homes in Foxboro and Tweed that were hit by the flooding are still awaiting some kind of action.

Premier, why does it seem that only residents in some disaster-affected parts of the province receive immediate help from this government?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think the member opposite knows full well that when there is an application in terms of disaster relief, that has to go through a process. I think he knows that perfectly well. He also knows that when there is a disaster—and it doesn't matter where it is in the province—there are emergency management personnel who are on the ground. They are at the disposal of those municipalities in every situation, Mr. Speaker.

I spoke with mayors in the region that he's talking about. I've spoken with mayors and councillors in other parts of the province where there have been problems, whether it was with tornadoes or flooding. He knows full well that the emergency management response folks are available immediately. Those are provincial resources that are at the disposal of the municipalities. He knows that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Todd Smith: Let me remind the Premier that you could personally deliver gift cards and disaster relief when it was a riding that you wanted to take from the NDP. You were there the next morning knocking on their door with a gift card, with a photo op going.

The problem is that it's not like this kind of a delay is a one-time occurrence. This isn't even the only municipality in Prince Edward-Hastings that is waiting for disaster relief. Prince Edward county has been given the runaround in trying to fill out its disaster relief paperwork for over a half-million-dollars' worth of damage that it sustained during that same ice storm where you were gladly handing out the gift cards here in Toronto. In fact, your government has had to start up a special program just to deal with the issue for Prince Edward county—more red tape.

Premier, you could find immediate relief for other municipalities affected by last winter's ice storm. Why is it that you can't do the right thing for the people of Prince Edward county and Prince Edward-Hastings?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: That's a question that is well beneath the dignity of any member of this House, because the reality is that it is the responsibility of government to deal with and to work with all of the people of the province, and that is what I do every single day; that is what our government does every single day. To suggest that we would treat one part of the province differently than others is simply not the case.

The Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program, ODRAP, helps municipalities and individuals, but the member opposite knows perfectly well that there is a process. There is a process that requires that there be a distinction between what is the municipal infrastructure that needs support and what is the personal and private property that needs support. It takes time to unravel that, whether it's in Goderich or in Thunder Bay or in Peterborough or whether it is in Prince Edward-Hastings. The reality is that that process is in place, and we will make sure that—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Joe Cimino: The question is to the Minister of Transportation. The people of the north have long called for the widening of northern highways as the lifeline to their communities. In particular, the four-laning or twinning of Highway 69 is a must for the health and safety of those who travel north or south along that corridor, as well as the economic development of the region.

The budget tabled in this House tells us that in the last 10 years only 50 kilometres of Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound have been widened. Right now there are 18 kilometres under construction, with another 80 kilometres left to go. Meanwhile, the government has stated that the entire project will be completed by 2017-18. Minister, will the government complete the four-laning of all of Highway 69 by 2017-18?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to begin, because I believe this is the first question that the newly elected member from Sudbury has had the chance to ask, by congratulating him on his election win.

I also want to say that this government, over the last 10 years, has an extraordinary story to tell with respect to the commitments and the investments that we made in northern Ontario. That is in large part due to the fact that the members who served in this caucus and this government over the last 10 years have worked very, very hard to make sure that we are moving forward in a positive way with the kinds of projects—including the project that the member from Sudbury has just talked about. In fact, since 2003, our government has invested more than \$601 million, and we've spent that on expansion to four-lane and to initiate other safety improvements on Highway 69 between, for example, Port Severn and Sudbury.

We know we have additional work to do. We will continue to work hard. In yesterday's budget, we talked about the \$29 billion that we intend to invest over the next 10 years to make sure that every corner of this province is properly served with the transportation infrastructure that we need.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Joe Cimino: Minister, I understand that the last 80-kilometre stretch of Highway 69 to be twinned first involves consultations with First Nations. What guarantees will this minister make that the twinning of Highway 69 will be completed by 2017-18?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member opposite for the supplementary question. As I said in my initial answer, we have worked very hard over the last 10 years to make sure that all corners of this province, including northern Ontario, including the community of Sudbury and areas near Sudbury, have had the investments they need.

As has been mentioned, 50 kilometres of this particular highway have already been completed and an additional 20 kilometres are currently under construction. I know that Ministry of Transportation staff are working very hard to get the needed approvals for the remaining 82 kilometres to complete the corridor.

What I also know is that in yesterday's budget, as I mentioned a second ago, we committed to invest \$29 billion over the next 10 years to make sure that communities right across this province, including Sudbury and across northern Ontario, have the transportation infrastructure they need. We will continue, on this side of the House, to work very hard to make sure that we fulfill these commitments.

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Harinder Malhi: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. Small businesses are the cornerstone of our economy. In fact, 99% of businesses in Ontario are small or medium-sized. Our government's plan to create jobs and grow our economy will support small businesses by continuing to cut red tape, invest in infrastructure and make smart strategic investments that create conditions to allow businesses what they need to thrive. The minister recently reintroduced a bill that would legislate some of these objectives.

Entrepreneurs and small business owners in Brampton–Springdale are anxious to hear how this legislation will make running a business in Ontario easier. Could the minister please provide this House with an overview of the legislation and how it supports our government's plan to create jobs and grow our economy?

1110

Hon. Brad Duguid: Congratulations to the member from Brampton–Springdale for her first question in the Legislature, albeit with a little hesitation at first. But she's up on her feet and it's great to see.

Small business is critical to our economy. Their innovation and entrepreneurial spirit create jobs and drive our next-generation economy.

This government is committed to working with small businesses and the CFIB to do everything we can to make it easier to do business in Ontario. We have already removed 80,000 regulatory requirements on business. That's a 70% cut in regulatory burden.

The Better Business Climate Act, if passed, will commit the Ontario government to measuring and reporting annually on progress made in reducing regulatory burden. It also requires ministries to undertake to measure the impacts of one burden reduction project every year. By 2016-17, that will save Ontario businesses about \$100 million.

We're proud of this piece of legislation. I encourage the members opposite to support us in moving forward on behalf of small businesses in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Harinder Malhi: Thank you, Minister, for the update. It's great to hear how small businesses are being supported across Ontario, and I am glad to see that this government recognizes the contribution that small businesses make to our economy.

In my riding of Brampton–Springdale, my constituents are looking to understand how our strategic investments

and our partnerships with businesses are creating jobs and growing our economy across Ontario.

Our government is committed to partnering with industry in a fiscally responsible way through initiatives like the Southwestern and Eastern Ontario Development Funds and the Rural Economic Development Fund. These investments help them compete and expand operations. Most importantly, these funds create jobs and grow our economy.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure: Could the minister please elaborate on how this legislation will help Ontario build strong clusters to sustain our thriving economic sectors across the province?

Hon. Brad Duguid: We're passionately committed to building a more competitive business environment in Ontario. By building regional clusters and reducing regulatory burden, this legislation, if passed, will create jobs and grow our economy in all areas of the province. It will require government, in consultation with business, academia, labour and non-profit organizations, to develop plans for regional economic clusters.

We know that strong regional hubs spur innovation and collaboration, and when sectors thrive, our province is better positioned to attract new global investments. Cisco and OpenText are just two examples of global companies that chose to invest in Ontario because of our thriving tech sector.

This legislation would require government to publicly release cluster development plans with a mandate to review every five years. Combined with the measures proposed in our budget, these measures would build a stronger, more competitive Ontario economy and create jobs for our province.

INVASIVE SPECIES

Mr. Toby Barrett: To the Minister of Natural Resources: I raised the question of Asian carp devastation with your predecessor, and he told me to go lobby my federal cousins. So I did talk to my federal counterpart, and I'm pleased to announce that they have tackled the problem. Haldimand-Norfolk Cabinet Minister Diane Finley and Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound MP Larry Miller announced the opening of a state-of-the-art research facility in Burlington that will allow the analysis of samples in Canada, rather than waiting on American facilities to do the work. The federal government also committed to more monitoring at detection sites and collaborative research with the United States.

So the ball is in your court, Minister. My question: When is your ministry going to go a step beyond the ban on live Asian carp and require that any fish imported for food be gutted?

Hon. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member for the question. He absolutely raises an issue that is of serious concern to those of us on this side of the House and, I think, all parties, including both opposition parties. I want to thank him for the question.

I would say the obvious response for me, as the new Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, would be to congratulate the former minister on the introduction in the Legislature of the Invasive Species Act, which in fact was introduced into the Legislature not that long ago. As a result of the opposition parties making a decision that an election was necessary, that particular piece of legislation did not have an opportunity to come forward. Obviously, it's our intention to reintroduce that legislation at the very earliest opportunity. Obviously, that speaks very clearly to how importantly we take this issue as well as the issue around all invasive species in the province of Ontario. We look forward to the opportunity to reintroduce this legislation at the earliest opportunity.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Certainly you know that if Asian carp do become established in the Great Lakes it will devastate our commercial fishery, our recreational fishery and our boating industry.

Minister, I travelled on my own dime to testify before the US Army Corps of Engineers on alternatives for the Chicago-area waterways. When I read the final transcripts of agencies and individuals who testified, there was no representation from the Ontario government.

Why does your government still not take this seriously enough to even provide comments, let alone redirect necessary funding? We know MNR has finally been allowed by this government to table legislation, not that the carp are going to obey it. When will government resources be reallocated to your ministry, to MNR, to help steer off this clear and present danger?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Bill Mauro: Again, I thank the member for his question. I will recommend and commend and thank the federal government for their investment. I did receive a note on this last week or two weeks ago. Their investment—I think the lab is in Burlington—is welcomed. It's proactive. We thank them for their investment speaking very clearly to an issue that is of great concern to us.

But I would say to the member that, as is often the case, Ontario was proactive on the issue and in fact moved on this issue far before this announcement last week about the lab in Burlington. Again, I think it was one or two years ago, a very short time ago, when, through our government, we made an investment of \$15 million or so in an invasive species research centre in Sault Ste. Marie in the former minister's riding.

In fact, I would say to the member that the legislation was there. We've invested in our own lab and research centre in Sault Ste. Marie on this issue. It speaks very clearly to obviously how seriously we're taking the issue. As I've said, we look forward to the earliest opportunity to reintroduce the legislation, the Invasive Species—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question?

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The Liberal Trojan Horse budget contains a lot of surprises but it's missing a lot of things, too. For years now, families in Kingston have been fighting to save their local schools and preserve their downtown, but Liberals refuse to listen. This budget does nothing to stop the closure of Kingston Collegiate and Queen Elizabeth Collegiate. In fact, it leaves even more schools at risk of closing right across the province.

Will the Premier explain why her Trojan Horse budget leaves Kingston schools on the chopping block?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I actually want to talk about some of the things that are in the budget for education. For example, over the next 10 years, we actually have an \$11-billion investment in new infrastructure for schools. In particular, over the next few years we've got a huge investment of billions of dollars in funding to renew schools, because we know that many of the schools in Ontario were built for the baby boomer generation, and that in many schools in Ontario we actually do need to have some retrofitting and some renewal going on. We have a significant budget that is specifically targeted at renewing schools throughout Ontario that need some upgrading.

I am very proud of the fact that we have invested more in renewing schools and building new schools than any other government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, this budget sends a pretty clear message to families. The government plans to do nothing to save local schools like the ones in Kingston. In fact, this Trojan Horse budget lays out a plan for even more school closures and consolidations in small towns and urban neighbourhoods across our province. Even more parents will be forced to fight just to keep their local neighbourhood school open.

The Liberals might call it a plan "to reduce surplus space," but communities and families call it, plain and simple, school closures.

Why won't the Premier listen to families right across Ontario and, instead of closing local schools, do the right thing and keep them open, including the ones in Kingston?

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Hon. Liz Sandals: You know, one of the things that I found really fascinating when I was looking at their platform was that they thought it would be amazing if they spent \$60 million on school infrastructure. Has anybody listened to this? Some \$60 million versus billions, and they're complaining that we're not spending money on schools? Please, Speaker. This makes absolutely no sense.

But one of the things I was also delighted to see this year was that we've actually started to talk to boards about how they can make use of school space together, because there are a number of small rural communities

where there are a number of schools, all of which are half empty. In fact, part of that capital funding is available to communities where the boards get together to use school spaces together and make sure they have a good learning place for children from a variety of boards.

LEGAL AID

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Ma question est pour la procureure générale.

Since 2003, our government has consistently demonstrated its commitment to ensuring equal access to justice for the people of Ontario. I know that the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Aid Ontario have worked together over the years to provide legal aid services in Ontario that are effective and sustainable and support our most vulnerable.

I also understand that Legal Aid Ontario, an arm's-length and publicly funded agency, has introduced two new programs to further support community legal clinics and front-line client services. These clinics include valued agencies such as Parkdale Community Legal Services, West Toronto Community Legal Services, and Unison Health and Community Services, which together serve the riding of Davenport.

Mr. Speaker, could the Attorney General please tell us more about these programs introduced by Legal Aid Ontario?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Je voudrais remercier la députée de Davenport et la féliciter pour son élection. Merci beaucoup.

Last week, Legal Aid Ontario introduced two new programs. Depending on an individual's eligibility, the first program funds 10 hours with a family lawyer to engage in settlement discussions and finalize separation agreements. The other provides six hours of legal advice for those who have chosen mediation services to settle disputes.

Innovative legal service programs such as these two programs are made possible by commitments from our government, including the \$30-million increase which we committed to in our 2013 budget. This funding is meant specifically for family law services and demonstrates our government's belief that community and legal clinics play an integral role in Ontario's justice system.

This is part of our poverty reduction strategy, and I was very pleased to see the announcement by Legal Aid Ontario last week.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I thank the Attorney General for that answer. I am pleased to hear of our government's continued commitment to providing legal services to all Ontarians, regardless of their circumstances.

As the Attorney General just mentioned, in the 2013 budget, we committed to investing \$30 million over the next three years in additional funding to Legal Aid Ontario. This funding will go directly to the improvement of front-line client services through family law service centres and community and legal aid, not only in Davenport but across the whole province.

Mr. Speaker, could the Attorney General please tell us how the 2014 budget, if passed, will continue to show our commitment to the delivery of front-line legal services?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Again, Mr. Speaker, I'm so impressed with this member, because she really cares about constituents who are less fortunate in her community.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to announce that, if passed, the 2014 budget includes a strategy to expand access to legal aid by raising the income eligibility threshold to qualify for legal aid assistance. Currently, Legal Aid Ontario's income eligibility threshold is at \$10,800 for an individual. The budget proposes an incremental increase of 6% per year over the next seven years.

Ontario's legal aid system helps ensure Ontarians have access to the legal services they need. Again, this is part of our poverty reduction strategy. Thankfully we were re-elected because there is someone—a party—who is speaking on behalf of the less fortunate in our community.

RONDEAU PROVINCIAL PARK

Mr. Rick Nicholls: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, over the past two and three-quarter years I've established a very positive working relationship with former MNR ministers Gravelle and Oraziotti.

Rondeau park is home to 283 cottages, and these cottages belong in Rondeau. This park was first chartered as a cottage park back in 1894—that's 120 years ago. Throughout the decades, cottagers have lived in harmony with the park's nature.

Minister, in the past I've presented a win-win solution that would keep the cottagers in the park while being sensitive to the revenue challenges, its ecology and endangered species. Minister, will you commit today to working with me so that together we can come up with a plan to keep the cottagers in Rondeau well beyond their "get-out-of-town" deadline of December 31, 2017?

Hon. Bill Mauro: The member puts the pressure on me greatly by beginning his question by reminding everybody that I'm following in the footsteps of Ministers Gravelle and Oraziotti, but I'll do my best to meet his concern and his challenge.

The issue regarding Rondeau and the leases that exist, obviously, have garnered a great deal of attention over the last number of years. When I was not a minister, I followed the debate closely; I listened to it closely. As the member has said in his question, the leases do not expire until the end of December 2017. There is no decision imminent. I have been briefed on the issue. We are discussing it on a regular basis.

I will tell the member that I'm more than happy to work with him on an ongoing basis. I'm not apprised of his suggestions in relation to what he sees as the solution for Rondeau park. He has just suggested to me that he has some. I'm interested in hearing those, and I look

forward to working with the member on this particular issue.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Minister, in order to preserve these heritage cottages, action needs to be taken now. Cottages are in need of repair. Decades of family memories are at risk of being destroyed unless we come up with equitable solutions to their dilemma. Environmental reports are in, but unfortunately, an economic assessment is not.

Minister, I do have a plan to restore Rondeau to its glory days where there was a buzz within the community and a beehive of activity drawing families to the park. My fond memories include hiking, archery, biking, swimming, fishing, boating and family picnics. Minister, you're from the great Ontario northland. I know that you can relate and would not want to see these activities evaporate from the Rondeau landscape. Cottagers need the park, but more importantly, the park needs the cottagers.

Minister, will you commit today to ensuring that cottagers remain in Rondeau park?

Hon. Bill Mauro: One of the things—for lack of a better word—that the ministry went forward with, in terms of policy related to the leases at Rondeau, was the commissioning of two additional studies on both the environmental and economic impact. I believe that the member said in his question that one is in and one is not. It's my understanding that both of the studies are completed, that both of them are in and that the results of both of those studies are being reviewed for the potential impacts and the data that they yield in terms of the decision-making around Rondeau.

I would add for the member as well: It's my understanding that a third party review is being undertaken on both of the studies—both the environmental study and the economic activity study—so that we can very reliably count on the data that is yielded from both of those studies, and that will infuse our policy- and decision-making process on a go-forward basis.

Once we've had an opportunity to review the details from those studies, we'll be in a better position to advise the member of a decision, going forward.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question is to the Minister of Finance. The Power Dam Special Payment Program was implemented in 2001 to replace the property taxation revenue associated with the hydroelectric plants when they were deemed exempt. In the case of the community of Wawa, 47% of their property assessment base was declared exempt. If this Liberal government proceeds with the cancellation of this program, Wawa and 110 other small communities will be unable to meet their financial obligations.

Will this government stop the cuts to the Power Dam Special Payment Program before many of these communities are forced into financial crisis?

Hon. Charles Sousa: I thank the member opposite for the question, as well as for his advocacy. I know that he has been concerned about the effects that this will have on the communities in the north, particularly Wawa. We're having ongoing discussions, as we said we would. I appreciate the correspondence that you've had with me.

We are taking this up with the municipality, recognizing the adverse effects that that would have on one particular community versus the overall policy that we're putting forward. We're sensitive to that, and I congratulate you for bringing it forward as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Again to the Minister of Finance: The Power Dam Special Payment Program is a very small program, but the impact of the clawback is large for many small communities. The payments from this program are significant contributions to their revenue base.

Since 2001, the payments have not kept pace with either inflation or property taxation rates in any community, resulting in an unfair shift to the remaining assessment base. The only way for communities to recapture the lost revenue is through a property taxation increase or by cutting services.

Minister, please tell the good people of Wawa how progressive your budget is again. Will this government do the right thing and assist Wawa and 110 other communities affected by the significant loss of revenue due to the cuts that your budget is implementing?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Again, as I mentioned, we'll be working closely with the mayor of Wawa to ensure that the effects of this to the municipality are properly managed. We recognize the importance it has in that municipality to receive an appropriate level of support.

But keep in mind that, combined with OMPF, the province's uploads have increased by more than \$1.3 million since 2004—more than 85%. In 2014, this support includes nearly \$2.1 million through the OMPF—which is equivalent to \$1,222 per household, nearly 12 times the provincial average—and over \$850,000 through the provincial upload to social assistance benefits.

We recognize the importance of our municipalities. We are partnering with them, including Wawa, and our ministry will reach out to municipality representatives to seek input as part of our consultation process so that no one is adversely affected. We recognize the exceptional circumstances in Wawa and again thank you for bringing it to our attention.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Soo Wong: My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. I'm incredibly proud of our government's aspirational priorities that were laid out in the throne speech. International businesses are coming to Ontario, and local businesses grow here, because of the talent and dedication of our workforce. That is why in our government's throne speech we committed to building a stronger business climate. It is this govern-

ment's ambitious goal for Ontario to become North America's leading jurisdiction for talent, skills and training.

To achieve this goal, our government must have a pan-Ontario vision that understands regional considerations and needs. Speaker, through you to the minister, can he please inform the House of how his ministry's vision on skills and training development will build a stronger northern economy?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thank you very much for the question. I thank the member from Scarborough—Agin-court. I'm not going to get a supplementary, so I do want to make sure I get to the regional component, but certainly we are very, very proud of our government's determined and focused approach to skills development.

The 30% Off Ontario Tuition grant has made a huge difference in northern Ontario for students in university and college in terms of getting their first degree, and the youth employment fund is having a real impact already on 2,100 students in northern Ontario, but the northern component that is so important is really the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation's co-op and intern program. We've invested over \$63 million, which leveraged close to another \$36 million from community partners. We've been able to create almost 4,000 co-op placements and internships since 2005, so they are now getting the work experience they need to succeed.

These are great examples of programs that work to develop the skills that are needed to move our diversified economy forward in northern Ontario. I thank you for the time, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1134 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I would like to introduce my son who is visiting us today, Andrew Matlock—if you can stand up; he's in the members' gallery. I have no idea how this happened, Mr. Speaker, but somehow I managed to produce a child who is six foot four and a half. We're very proud of him and delighted to have him here today in the House.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PURPLE TURTLE ART FESTIVAL

Mrs. Julia Munro: This past Saturday and Sunday, the Purple Turtle Art Festival took place in my riding at the Briars Resort in Jackson's Point. Thirteen years ago, local artists got together to create the festival as a way to support local art and exhibit their talent to the community. This marked the 13th year for the festival, and I've had the honour of attending for the last few years; I should also add, spending some money there as well.

Everyone in Sutton and Jackson's Point looks forward to seeing the purple turtles pop up around the town prior to the festival to remind everyone about the upcoming event. The festival features the work of over 30 artists, including painters, potters, jewellers, sculptors, glass artists, native artists and woodworkers.

I am pleased to have attended the Purple Turtle Art Festival this weekend, and I congratulate the organizers, who include Malcolm Madsen, Penny Gyokeres and Cheryl Fulcher, on a successful 13th festival. These types of events are important for the community to come together and appreciate the talent of local Ontario artists.

BLUESFEST WINDSOR

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I am pleased to rise today to speak to you about a long-standing event that took place in my riding this past weekend. Bluesfest Windsor is a blues and roots festival that is enjoyed annually by not only the residents of Windsor and Essex county but by visitors from all over Ontario, as well as our neighbours across the border in the United States. Bluesfest Windsor draws an estimated audience of over 25,000 people over the course of the three-day festival, which takes place outdoors at the Riverfront Festival Plaza.

It is no surprise that with performances by leading artists such as Edgar and Johnny Winter, Robin Trower, Buddy Guy, Tim Robbins, the Yardbirds, Ten Years After, Jeff Healey, Gord Downie and so many more that Bluesfest Windsor is North America's ninth-largest blues festival and one of the top 12 blues venues in North America. In our region, this festival has been the place to be for seeing live performances by the who's who of local, regional and international blues artists.

Providing financial assistance to a number of non-profit and charitable beneficiaries annually, Bluesfest Windsor relies on the generous support of labour, community and corporate sponsors.

I offer my congratulations to the organizers as, this year, they celebrated 20 years of bringing Windsor and Essex county a heart full of soul.

Thank you, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Ten Years After—I saw them at Woodstock. That's how old I am.

ISLAMIC CENTRE OF CAMBRIDGE

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Last Friday, the Islamic Centre of Cambridge again warmly invited the community to share in their annual multi-faith dinner celebrating Ramadan.

Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim calendar, is a period of holy fasting, introspection and communal prayer for the Islamic community. During the month, Muslims focus on doing good deeds, quality family time and fasting from dawn till sundown. Fasting teaches self-discipline, self-restraint and generosity.

The daily fast is broken at dusk with a celebration called iftar, a gathering of friends, family and, ideally, the

community. The folks at the Islamic Centre certainly do this very well. They always generously open their doors to share a delicious dinner with local politicians and community leaders.

To begin, six young children filed onstage, stating which of the six different faiths they represented. The expression "out of the mouths of babes" had new meaning after hearing them speak of tolerance, acceptance and respect between cultures. The invited community policing officers said that these children are the most effective ambassadors to bring their message to the Cambridge community. This was much more a gathering of dear friends and family rather than a formal occasion.

Many thanks to Mr. Malik, Mr. Mohammed and Mr. Khokar and their volunteers. I sure look forward to their next community event on August 2.

GET IN TOUCH FOR HUTCH

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Today I would like to recognize the second annual Get in Touch for Hutch race. On June 28, in Arthur, around 600 participants joined together to raise \$50,000 for mental health initiatives and to end the stigma that surrounds mental illness. The walk and run honours the memory of Steven Hutchison.

Steven was a great student and talented athlete and had a strong presence in his community. Tragically, in 2013, he took his own life. Steven's family, friends and community have rallied together to raise awareness about mental health issues and end the stigma that so many people face. That stigma is what prevented Steven from reaching out for help.

His family is dedicated to ensuring that youth have ways to talk about their struggles. They have partnered with charities that provide youth the assistance they need when they need it.

To Kevin, Myrna and Stu, your drive and tireless work to remove the stigma that is attached to mental illness is inspirational. To all those who were a part of this year's Get in Touch for Hutch race, thank you for your generous contributions and your involvement in this important cause.

RALPH MAYVILLE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, let me tell you about an amazing individual by the name of Ralph Mayville.

His father died just weeks before the outbreak of the Second World War. He was just 17 years old when he signed up with the Essex Scottish. He was sent from Windsor to London and ended up in the RCR, the Royal Canadian Regiment. He was paid \$1.10 a day; half of that was sent home to his mother for food. He got shipped to Italy and ended up in an elite combined American and Canadian commando unit known as the First Special Service Force.

He was trained on the ground as a paratrooper but never actually jumped out of an airplane. One time, Ralph spent 99 straight days in combat on the front lines.

During night patrols, these commandos blackened their faces with boot polish and slipped behind the enemy lines armed with V-42 combat knives to take out enemy sentries and patrols. They would leave behind calling cards which read, "The worst is yet to come." They became known as the Devil's Brigade or the Black Devils. Hollywood made a movie about them.

Because he never jumped, Ralph refused to wear his paratrooper wings—until a couple of months ago, when, at the age of 92, Ralph Mayville jumped with a skydiving instructor from 14,000 feet. He says it was so beautiful he never wanted it to end.

I know Ralph as a gentleman, a man of honour, a man who never wore his wings until he felt he deserved them. I attended his pinning ceremony at the Canadian Historical Aircraft Association hangar on the Sunday before the recent election, Speaker, and I have to tell you: What a day. What a man. What a life.

Ralph Mayville: a well-deserved salute, sir, from the Ontario Legislature.

EASTERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT FUND

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I rise to talk about the many ways in which this government has already contributed enormously to our local economy. I'm speaking of the positive effects of the Eastern Ontario Development Fund, a perfect example of a program that promotes our well-educated, highly skilled workforce, that supports innovation, creates jobs and attracts further investment from the private sector.

Here are just a few of the many high-tech success stories in Kingston and the Islands that have been assisted by the EODF since 2011:

MetalCraft Marine, a world leader in the manufacture of high-speed aluminum boats, received \$417,000 for a \$4-million project and created 20 new full-time jobs and doubled the production capacity.

1510

Transformix Engineering, specialists in automation machinery: \$180,000, has 80 highly skilled positions and created 20 new full-time jobs.

Eikon Device, precision instruments: \$110,000 helped build a 20,000-square-foot facility and 10 new jobs.

Sensient Colors Canada, manufacturer of colourings: \$150,000 towards a \$3-million project.

ESG Solutions, a world leader in micro-seismic monitoring equipment: \$581,000, a \$5-million project and 10 new jobs.

These Kingston success stories are evidence that advanced manufacturing is a key part of this government's Building Ontario Up plan.

LAKE NIPISSING

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, over recent weeks, several abandoned gillnets filled with dead fish have been discovered in Lake Nipissing, in my riding. There is great concern among all stakeholders about the impact

this will have on the walleye fishery, which is under great pressure.

This situation has prompted unprecedented co-operation by Lake Nipissing stakeholders and partners, in an effort to put a halt to this. The North Bay and District Chamber of Commerce has been very vocal and has been a leader in bringing stakeholders together to find a solution.

Partners such as our own Ministry of Natural Resources; the Lake Nipissing Stakeholders Association; Nipissing First Nation; Bob Goulais, who is offering a \$1,000 reward; mayor Al McDonald from North Bay; Callander mayor Hec Lavigne; and Baysar, the search-and-rescue who are offering aerial surveillance to look for abandoned gillnets, are all working together in a real spirit of co-operation. In fact, Nipissing First Nation just hosted and funded their third annual Lake Nipissing Summit, engaging the community and all partners.

I support the proactive approach by our MNR to find a solution to this problem, and encourage the ministry to continue working in this manner with the stakeholders, as many of their livelihoods are dependent on a viable, sustainable fishery.

OTTAWA LEBANESE FESTIVAL

Mr. John Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to highlight a very important event that's happening in my riding of Ottawa South. The 24th annual Ottawa Lebanese Festival will get under way tomorrow with the raising of the Lebanese flag at Ottawa city hall, where the flag will fly until the end of the festival.

The festival is held on the grounds of the beautiful St. Elias cathedral, which you can tour each evening while the festival is on.

The Ottawa Lebanese Festival is a celebration of the rich Lebanese culture and the contributions the Lebanese community has made to both Canada and the world in literature, the arts, sciences, trade and commerce.

The festival is also a showcase for Lebanese cuisine, from fresh hummus and tabbouleh to traditional saj bread made right in front of your eyes. Just the food alone makes the festival a must-do for thousands of Ottawans and visitors to the capital who attend each year.

The festival partners to support local charities. This year, they continue their support for the Ottawa Regional Cancer Foundation.

To the many individuals and families who volunteer their time to host the festival, prepare the food and welcome the thousands of visitors, thank you for making the Ottawa Lebanese Festival such a meaningful and wonderful part of summer in Ottawa South.

Although I will not be able to attend the opening ceremonies, I very much look forward to joining all of you on the weekend when I get home.

BRIGHTON RELAY FOR LIFE

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Speaker, it's a pleasure to talk about the Brighton Relay for Life. About a year ago, I

was asked if I would be the honorary chair of this auspicious and worthwhile event. These Relay for Lives happen in many communities right across the province.

The event happened on June 6, right in the middle of our election campaign, but I was very happy to be able to take part and spend a night to do the opening ceremonies and then do the official closing ceremonies.

I must give credit to Karen White, the chair of the Relay for Life for Brighton. She really held all of the pieces together and made it happen.

I was delighted when all the tallies were done at the end of the day. What we had hoped to raise was some \$40,000 for this event, but we were all very, very surprised and happy to know that at the end of the day we raised \$63,810. I was delighted to be a part of such a role and I look forward to taking part in the Relay for Life in Trent Hills in Campbellford in September. It's a great activity to raise awareness for cancer and raise some money.

PASCAL GOULET

Mr. Michael Mantha: Point of order, please.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Algoma-Manitoulin on a point of order.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent for a moment of silence. Je demande le consentement unanime pour un moment de silence.

Thirty-eight-year-old Pascal Goulet died in Lac Des Iles mine recently, leaving behind his wife and two daughters. He was a proud USW member and a North American Palladium employee. Pour M. Pascal Goulet, qui laisse derrière lui son épouse et ses deux jeunes filles, je demande un moment de silence, s'il vous plaît.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Algoma-Manitoulin is seeking unanimous consent for a moment of silence to pay homage to the miner. Do we agree? Agreed. I would ask all members in the House to agree, to join us in a moment of silence, of respect.

The House observed a moment's silence.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

FIGHTING FRAUD AND REDUCING AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE RATES ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 DE LUTTE CONTRE LA FRAUDE ET DE RÉDUCTION DES TAUX D'ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE

Mr. Sousa moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 15, An Act to amend various statutes in the interest of reducing insurance fraud, enhancing tow and storage service and providing for other matters regarding vehicles and highways / Projet de loi 15, Loi visant à modifier diverses lois dans le but de réduire la fraude à l'assurance, d'améliorer les services de remorquage et

d'entreposage et de traiter d'autres questions touchant aux véhicules et aux voies publiques.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I will be giving the bill to Ashley, our page.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Hon. Charles Sousa: If passed, the measures being introduced in this bill would help protect Ontario drivers, tackle fraud, and reduce costs and uncertainty in the auto insurance system.

There are more than nine million drivers in Ontario. Our government has made a commitment to keeping the auto insurance system fair and more affordable.

In August of last year, we announced our cost and rate reduction strategy, which is targeting an industry-wide average of a 15% reduction in authorized auto insurance rates within two years. The measures proposed in this bill would move forward on our strategy by helping to reduce costs in the system and continuing to fight fraud. Auto insurance rates are directly linked to claim costs. Reducing cost and uncertainty in the system would help reduce rates for Ontario drivers.

One of the cornerstones of this legislation is a proposal to transform Ontario's auto insurance dispute resolution system to help ensure that injured Ontario drivers settle their disputes faster. This legislation would create a new framework for disputes by moving the administrative responsibility and its adjudicative process from FSCO, the Financial Services Commission of Ontario, to the Ministry of the Attorney General. The move would help resolve disputes faster by making the process more effective and efficient while ensuring it remains accessible for accident victims.

1520

If passed, the changes we're proposing would expedite the resolution of disputes as well as reduce financial administrative pressures which can increase costs and cause rates to go up. Transforming dispute resolutions would help reduce uncertainty, create long-term stability in claim costs, and provide claimants with faster access to the statutory accident benefits that they require.

In addition to streamlining dispute resolutions, this bill also proposes measures to protect Ontario consumers and continue cracking down on auto insurance fraud. We're proposing to establish consumer protection specific to towing and vehicle storage, and also give the government stronger enforcement powers. The proposed changes would provide authority to require towing and storage providers to publish their rates, provide an itemized invoice of their listings of services, accept payments by credit card, tell the driver that their vehicle is being towed for repair or storage, and give the consumer access to his or her towed vehicle to remove personal property.

Lastly, we're also proposing to amend the traffic act to remove the exemption for tow trucks under MTO's commercial vehicle operator's registration system.

The new legislation would allow us to set qualifications and standards governing the operation of tow trucks, including driver certification, training requirements and prescribed penalties to violators.

As well, we're also helping to protect drivers by authorizing vehicle storage to protect consumers as to when their vehicle can be stored after an accident, accruing charges, and doing so without notice to the owner. This will, again, enable them to save without having abusive storage practices to remove associated costs from the auto insurance system.

We're modernizing licensing and disciplinary hearings for insurance agents and adjusters as well. If passed, this means FSCO would have the authority to revoke or immediately suspend the licences of agents and adjusters who act improperly and put the public at risk. This is just another much-needed measure to help reduce rates and help protect Ontario consumers.

Lastly, the bill would implement measures to reform the prejudgement interest rates for general damages and again reduce costs by protecting and expediting matters more quickly for claimants. This rate, actually, hasn't been updated since 1990. Linking the rate to current market conditions would help reduce the cost to bodily injury claims and auto insurance systems while still ensuring fairness for consumers.

As mentioned, higher costs in the system translate to higher insurance premiums, and we're fighting fraud by lowering those costs.

We had introduced this back in February. Unfortunately, it was delayed, so we recognize that by expediting it quickly today we'll be able to act on the very things that consumers require, and that's to reduce the rates as quickly as possible.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I am going to take a moment to explain circumstances behind my leniency, if there was any needed. It is traditional that you read from the explanatory notes when you introduce a bill. In some circumstances, the explanatory notes can be very lengthy. Ministers or anyone introducing bills can help us by reducing and giving us a synopsis of those explanatory notes, which I'm assuming has happened here today. If that's the case, that's very permissible in normal procedures.

If there is a speech written for this, then that is not an appropriate place to do it; it would be in ministerial statements.

I'm just making sure that everyone is aware of the procedures that are normally followed in the House, and I'm sure it just got followed.

PETITIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Todd Smith: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas household electricity bills have skyrocketed by 56% and electricity rates have tripled as a result of the Liberal government's mismanagement of the energy sector;

"Whereas the billion-dollar gas plant scandal, wasteful and unaccountable spending at Ontario Power Generation and the unaffordable subsidies in the Green Energy Act will result in electricity bills climbing by another 35% by 2017 and 45% by 2020;

"Whereas the soaring cost of electricity is straining family budgets, particularly in rural Ontario, and hurting the ability of manufacturers and small businesses in the province to compete and create new jobs; and

"Whereas home heating and electricity are essential for families in rural Ontario who cannot afford to continue footing the bill for the government's mismanagement;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately implement policies ensuring Ontario's power consumers, including families, farmers, and employers, have affordable and reliable electricity."

I agree with this and will send it to the table with Daniel.

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that was collected by Mrs. Lawrie Smith from my riding, in Lively—Naughton, actually. It reads as follows:

"Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline; and

"Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

"Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of gas-price regulation; and

"Whereas jurisdictions with gas-price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices;"

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to "mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page David to bring it to the Clerk.

CHILDHOOD APRAXIA OF SPEECH

Mr. Mike Colle: I have many petitions here from Lisa and David Brennan from Mississauga. They did this for their son, Matthew. It's a petition to designate May 14 as Apraxia Awareness Day in Ontario.

"Whereas childhood apraxia of speech is a rare neurological speech disorder that affects oral motor planning;

"Whereas an estimated 3% to 5% of the world's childhood population are diagnosed with childhood apraxia of speech;

"Whereas Ontario has excellent speech-language centres and programs that currently provide treatment for childhood apraxia of speech;

"Whereas children diagnosed in Canada with childhood apraxia of speech are eligible to receive the children's disability tax credit to assist with therapy costs;

"Whereas greater public awareness of speech disorders," especially in Hamilton, "and the benefits of early intervention speech-language therapy are needed" all over Ontario;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to join the United States of America in declaring May 14 as Apraxia Awareness Day" in this great province.

I support this important petition and affix my name to it.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr. Jeff Yurek: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Health Canada approved Esbriet in October 2012 for individuals with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF);

"Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has declined to list Esbriet on the Ontario drug benefit formulary or reimburse patients through the Exceptional Access Program;

"Whereas Esbriet is the first of its kind to be approved in Canada for the treatment of IPF and will slow the progression of this fatal disease;

"Whereas the high cost of Esbriet is creating financial hardships for many individuals and their families. Only those patients who have access to a private drug plan can afford the cost of this medication, forcing some patients to go without treatment;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To review and reconsider the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's decision to decline any assistance with Esbriet and consider some form of assistance with the cost of this medication in order to improve the lives of Ontarians with IPF and decrease the cost on the health care system associated with this disease."

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this petition and affix my signature to it.

CREDIT UNIONS

Mr. Paul Miller: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario's economy and create jobs in three ways:

"—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

"—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

"—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries."

I agree with this, Mr. Speaker, and will sign it, and it will be Ashley bringing it.

1530

CREDIT UNIONS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, you may have heard this petition before, but it is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and signed by a great number of people in my riding.

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario's economy and create jobs in three ways:

"—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

"—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

"—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries."

Thank you very much for allowing me to present this petition on behalf of my constituents.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads:

"Whereas Health Canada has approved the use of Esbriet for patients with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF), a rare, progressive and fatal disease characterized by scarring of the lungs; and

"Whereas Esbriet, the first and only approved medication in Canada for the treatment of IPF, has been shown to slow disease progression and to decrease the decline in lung function; and

"Whereas the lack of public funding for Esbriet is especially devastating for seniors with IPF who rely exclusively on the provincial drug program for access to medications;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately provide Esbriet as a choice to patients with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis and their health care providers in Ontario through public funding."

I agree with the petition, will affix my name and give it to page David to send to the Clerks' table.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further petitions? I recognize the member from Simcoe–Grey.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations on your new position.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's tradespeople are subject to stifling regulation and are compelled to pay membership fees to the unaccountable College of Trades; and

"Whereas these fees are a tax grab that drives down the wages of skilled tradespeople; and

"Whereas Ontario desperately needs a plan to solve our critical shortage of skilled tradespeople by encouraging our youth to enter the trades and attracting new tradespeople; and

"Whereas the latest policies from the McGuinty government only aggravate the looming skilled trades shortage in Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately disband the College of Trades, cease imposing needless membership fees and enact policies to attract young Ontarians into skilled trade careers."

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

HOME CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: It's my pleasure to present this petition that comes from all over Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas many Ontarians need health care services at home and 6,100 people are currently on wait-lists for care;

"Whereas waiting for over 200 days for home care is unacceptable;

"Whereas eliminating the wait-lists won't require any new funding if the government caps hospital CEO salaries, finds administrative efficiencies in the local health integration networks (LHINs) and community care access centres (CCACs), standardizes procurement policies and streamlines administration costs;

They "petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"That a five-day home care guarantee is established and existing wait-lists eliminated so that Ontarians receive the care they need within a reasonable time frame."

I really support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask our very busy page David to bring it to the Clerk.

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further petitions? I recognize the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations on your appointment as the deputy speaker.

I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the University of Guelph's Kemptville and Alfred campuses are two of Ontario's outstanding post-secondary agricultural schools; and

"Whereas these campuses have delivered specialized and high-quality programs to generations of students from agricultural communities across eastern Ontario and the future success of the region's agri-food industry depends on continuing this strong partnership; and

"Whereas regional campuses like those in Kemptville and Alfred ensure the agri-food industry has access to the knowledge, research and innovation that are critical for Ontario to remain competitive in this rapidly changing sector;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Premier Wynne in her dual capacity as Minister of Agriculture and Food act immediately to reverse the University of Guelph's short-sighted and unacceptable decision to close its Kemptville and Alfred campuses."

I agree with this and will be passing it off to page Daniel.

SERVICES DIAGNOSTIQUES

M. Taras Natyshak: J'ai une pétition ici à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario qui dit :

« Alors que l'Ontario a fait la tomographie par émission de positons (TEP) un service de santé assuré par le régime public pour les patients atteints du cancer et de maladies cardiaques lorsque les données cliniques indiquent que cette technique est efficace dans leur cas; et

« Alors que depuis octobre 2009, des TEP assurées sont effectuées à Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton, ainsi qu'à Thunder Bay; et

« Considérant que la ville du Grand Sudbury est une plaque tournante pour la santé dans le Nord-Est, qui compte Horizon Santé-Nord et son programme régional de cancer, de même que l'École de médecine du Nord de l'Ontario;

« Nous, soussignés, demandons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario d'offrir la TEP par le biais

d'Horizon Santé-Nord, donnant ainsi un accès équitable aux résidents du Nord-Est ontarien. »

J'appuie cette pétition. Je vais la donner à David.

MARKDALE HOSPITAL

Mr. Bill Walker: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Grey Bruce Health Services’ Markdale hospital is the only health care facility between Owen Sound and Orangeville on the Highway 10 corridor;

“Whereas the community of Markdale rallied to raise \$13 million on the promise they would get a new state-of-the-art hospital in Markdale;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care announce as soon as possible its intended construction date for the new Markdale hospital and ensure that the care needs of the patients and families of our community are met in a timely manner.”

I support this and will give it to page Nardien to take to the Clerks’ table.

BREASTFEEDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from families in Brantford, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas Health Canada, the Canadian Paediatric Society and the World Health Organization recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life with continued breastfeeding along with other food sources for up to two years and beyond for optimal health;

“Whereas breastfeeding is normal and natural but like childbirth it can be complicated requiring specialized support for a family’s success;

“Whereas lactation consultants are trained, internationally certified breastfeeding specialists who can assist women having breastfeeding problems, and be resources of breastfeeding expertise in the community;

“Whereas Brantford, until 2005 when the service was cut, had a breastfeeding clinic run by lactation consultants at Brantford General Hospital which was highly utilized;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to facilitate the reinstatement of a lactation consultant-led breastfeeding clinic in Brantford General Hospital.”

I fully support this petition, Speaker, will affix my name to it and ask my good page David to bring it to the Clerk.

LYME DISEASE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further petitions? I recognize the member from Prince Edward-Hastings.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you very much, and congratulations, Mr. Speaker, on your appointment. I’ve never seen such a dignified Speaker.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn’s, Alzheimer’s, arthritic diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe; and

“Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of their professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario; and

“Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario Health Insurance Plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process for establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives 45% to 95% of the time;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to direct the Ontario public health system and OHIP to include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme disease in Ontario and to have everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians.”

I strongly agree with this and will send it to the table with page Daniel.

1540

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2014 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on July 14, 2014, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Jim Wilson: It’s a pleasure to take a few moments to respond to the government’s budget. I’ll be sharing my time with my colleagues the members for Nipissing, Haldimand-Norfolk and Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

Last month, we lost another 33,900 jobs. It was the 90th consecutive month that our province’s unemployment rate has been higher than the national average. That’s seven and a half years—unbelievable. Liberal policies have made our energy rates the highest in North America. Liberal policies are driving business and invest-

ment out of Ontario and putting the squeeze on hard-working families, especially seniors on fixed incomes. Our debt rating outlook has already changed from stable to negative, and soon the government will be underfunding more vital services, like they already are with home care and physiotherapy services for seniors, to pay for higher interest costs on their irresponsible debt.

The government is clearly living far beyond its means, and instead of taking the time to present a responsible budget with solutions, the Liberals reissued rash and irresponsible promises without a plan to pay for them.

At the same time that the Liberal government is being absolutely unrealistic and irresponsible in how they spend our money, they had the nerve to tell Ontarians that the government doesn't trust them to plan their own finances, especially finances in the future. It's just arrogant and hypocritical for the government to scold Ontarians for not saving enough for their retirement when the Liberals are responsible for increasing the cost of day-to-day living in Ontario: HST on everything they buy, rising government fees, eco taxes, spending more on gas because commutes are longer, a health premium that doesn't exclusively go to health care and skyrocketing energy bills. If Ontarians aren't saving for their retirement, it's because there is no money at the end of the month after they've paid for all the essentials. Docking more money from people's paycheques for the government's pension scheme will just further squeeze hard-pressed families and lose even more jobs, as the government's own finance officials have warned.

This budget is political instead of practical. The government originally presented it last May for the partisan purposes of forcing the NDP to either support a budget that could have been written by former NDP Premier Bob Rae, or create a rift within the NDP by voting against it. The budget is no more credible than this government's previous claims that the gas plant scandal would cost only \$40 million when the real cost, we found out, was at least \$1.1 billion. How much more pain will yesterday's budget inflict on all of us?

Again, the Liberals achieved their partisan goal of piling on the NDP with the May budget. But now, after an election, they could have taken the time to craft a budget that addressed the needs of Ontario families and businesses instead of Liberal self-interest.

We asked them to take their time. We told them we would not hold them to their rash political promise to rush this budget through. Instead of thoughtful policy, Premier Wynne decided it's more important to continue her vendetta against Andrea Horwath, the leader of the NDP, and her party, and everyone has to shoulder the consequences. Higher taxes, cuts to front-line services and more job losses are coming down the road because the Liberals will increase debt by spending \$12.5 billion more than taxpayers have already given the government.

We've already seen front-line cuts: 40 nursing positions cut in North Bay; 90 nurses put out of work in Ottawa; cuts to nurses, 34 of them, in Windsor; and cuts to teachers in Windsor.

Norman Levine, the managing director of Portfolio Management, said this budget makes both debt and unemployment worse. He warned, "What's going to happen is once the budget comes out, rating agencies are going to downgrade them, and there will be more than one downgrade because they're showing no plans to address it, so they're going to be downgraded multiple times."

That leads me to the response to a question in question period about future downgrades on our debt and skyrocketing costs to service that debt. The Premier was quite selective in choosing to only put forth in the response that the Dominion Bond Rating Service had reaffirmed our rating. But if you actually read their press release—and I've asked the library to send me the entire report—it's really quite negative. I'll just read it to be fair to the government: "DBRS acknowledges that the medium-term outlook has somewhat weakened since last year, owing to a combination of slightly lower revenues and higher program spending projections, raising doubts that the government will have the fortitude to make difficult decisions required to adhere to its original targets...."

"Overall, while the recent erosion in fiscal outlook is manageable, the province remains vulnerable given the extent of fiscal effort needed amidst below-potential economic conditions. This remains a concern for DBRS and highlights the risk of stretching the return to balance over an extended period of time and relying on improving economic conditions to restore fiscal soundness."

I just know from my experience running rather large bureaucracies in the past that when the bond rating agencies say they have concern, it's a code word for "watch out."

And it goes on. It's actually a very negative comment on the government. They don't believe, as I said, that you have the fortitude within the next three years to actually stop your wild spending and give us all a break and balance the books.

I just want to reiterate, Mr. Speaker, and then wind up. A credit downgrade has tangible consequences since a 1% increase in the interest Ontario pays on its debt will cost as much as \$3 billion more annually—\$3 billion that we will be borrowing, by the way. All Ontarians will pay the price for higher borrowing costs that will take billions out of priority services or billions out of everyone's wallet in new taxes.

To this day, the finance minister and Premier keep telling us to trust them. Somehow they will find a way to balance the budget within three years even though they're spending more money. Somehow they will introduce new programs and operational spending while paying billions more in debt interest. Somehow the additional billions in debt servicing costs won't have an impact on front-line services. No wonder media have dubbed this budget a "fiscal fairy tale."

As I've said, it's immoral to give people false hope with a budget that media have rightly dubbed a "fiscal fairy tale" only to have to take away services and programs when the lenders put a gun to the Liberals' heads and say their line of credit has dried up. It happened to Bob Rae, and it will happen again.

How can the finance minister and Premier keep a straight face as they preach the impossible? While they blame taxpayers and the economy for not delivering as much revenue as they expected, they refuse to admit that it is their own bad policy decisions that have made a mess of our economy. Other governments, both provincial and federal, in this country are well on their way to balancing their budgets. What's the difference? Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm looking at it across the aisle.

You should be ashamed, for having driven Ontario's economy into the ground, for destroying our manufacturing sector, for devastating the horse racing community, for forcing seniors to decide between food and hydro. You should be ashamed, for causing a generation of eager college and university graduates to lose hope of finding a good job in Ontario and move westward.

We'll be voting against this budget, in support of the people and businesses and jobs across Ontario—the businesses that can't afford to have their future mortgaged by bad policy decisions and the 33,900 people who lost their jobs last month alone. We will hold the Liberals to account, on their behalf, for their unrealistic and unaffordable budget. We will do that each and every day of the week.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to echo a number of the comments from our interim leader. I think he hit it off very well and made the people out here listening aware of the situation that we find ourselves in with this budget.

I'm going to break my comments into two pieces, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to talk a little bit about my local riding and the things that I don't see for my riding, and I'm going to talk about the big picture for Ontario.

We know this government is going to spend—if there is one thing that they do well, spending is probably it—so we know there's going to be money. But part of our job as the official opposition is to ensure, on behalf of the taxpayers—the people paying the freight—that every dollar is spent wisely and effectively and, most importantly, for the benefit of the people who are actually paying.

So I was pleased to see, particularly with my recent critic portfolio, that there's money earmarked for social services and long-term care and wellness. However, Mr. Speaker, in reviewing the budget a little bit last night, I noted the actual interest payment that is made on our debt is more than the whole social services sector. There are people out there who need programs; there are people out there who need services. We're spending more on interest payments than we are on those most fragile, those most needy, those who need a hand up. There are 21,000 people currently on developmental services wait-lists across our province. That's horrible in the great province of Ontario.

1550

We are hoping, but this government does not have a great track record of producing when they say they will

do something. What they do promise, and break, are things like, "I will not raise your taxes." We all remember the health tax a number of years ago, so I'm fearful that, again, we're going to find those same situations.

This government is spending \$3 billion more than it brings in in revenues. Your home budget can't take it. The people watching and listening at home, their home budget can't take that and continue to go down without losing the home. We were hoping to see some fiscal restraint. We were hoping to see that they would have actually learned the lesson. Sadly, that's not the case.

The interim leader, the great member from Simcoe-Grey, has been here for 24 years, I believe, and served this province marvellously over those years as health minister and as energy minister in past PC governments. He expressed that we are now a province that is in a debt situation, and this government is doing nothing to pull us back out of that. And yet, miraculously, even though they're going to spend \$3 billion more this year than they bring in in revenue, they've committed to balancing the budget in 2017-18. I'm not certain, without voodoo economics, how they're going to be able to do that. You can't continue to overspend and deliver all the services and not make cuts along the way somewhere.

When I was out on the election campaign trail, people were asking me that very question: "How will the Liberals do this? They're promising. They have made commitments to us."

That brings me to my local area. This is supposed to be the infrastructure budget, one of the biggest infrastructure spending budgets in recent history in our great province. Yet in my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, we have a number of long-term-care and aging nursing homes that need help—not one word in there, not one dollar allotted to those. Again, those seniors who have built this great province and to whom we owe what we have today—nothing in there to address their needs.

Hospitals were supposedly in this budget. I've referenced in this House, at every opportunity, the Markdale hospital. Twelve years ago, the government of the day, the Liberals, promised and committed, and challenged the people of Markdale and area to raise money for their hospital: \$12 million. In fact, it's now \$13 million with interest, because it has been sitting in the bank for a dozen years, doing nothing to help the people it was intended to help. Not one thing is in there about that, Mr. Speaker, not one commitment.

Now, in fairness to the minister, I did raise the question last week, and he has agreed to a meeting, but that meeting means nothing if there's not action behind that.

There was talk in the budget of schools. Again, I went through the list looking for John Diefenbaker Secondary School in Hanover—a commitment the government made to that great community, to our Bluewater District School Board—but nothing was in there, Mr. Speaker.

So you can understand, I hope, and I hope even the people across the aisle can understand, why I have a slight degree of concern. I wonder if I can trust them, because they've made these promises to the people of my

riding, and they have not come through. They have not delivered.

What they have delivered is the highest debt and the highest deficit in the history of our great province. We carry more debt today than the rest of the provinces combined. Ontario should be the economic engine of this great Confederation. It's now accepting handouts. It's actually embarrassing. I think, for most of us to even admit that this government of 10 years, this Liberal government, has run us into the ground. They're borrowing from those young pages in front of you, from the young kids out there. That's who I care about, Mr. Speaker: the next generation. What are they going to do if this government doesn't soon turn things around?

I'm concerned that there's going to be more waste and more scandals. In my two and a half years, I've watched things like the gas plant billion-dollar boondoggle; I've watched eHealth; I've watched and learned of Ornge and the money that has been wasted in all of those projects and programs. Again, every single dollar that is spent on those boondoggles, on those scandals, is not going to the front line, to the people most needy: those seniors out there who have seen their hydro bills double and triple in the last three years. We're being told already by this Liberal government that you can expect those rates to increase again and double in the next three to four years. People are coming to my office every day saying, "I can't afford my hydro bills"—nothing in there to address that.

Now, they did talk about taking the debt retirement charge off, I think in 2017 or 2018—

Interjection.

Mr. Bill Walker: In 2016? Mr. Speaker, that debt was done four or five years ago. That's like you paying your Visa two years ago and still getting a bill and paying it. It doesn't make sense, and I can't understand why they need yet again two more years to get that under control. The people of Ontario deserve better.

I was reading, this morning, some of the clippings in the Globe and Mail. One of the things that they reported—I'm just using this; it's not a prop. I'm going to quote from here: "If the Liberal government sticks to this budget, there will be pain. There will be hard choices. And there will be disappointed supporters."

They go on to say, "But with four more years of majority government ahead ... Premier Wynne is going to have to face some of the hard choices she studiously avoided talking about during the election."

I believe our interim leader talked about her and the finance minister being disingenuous, suggesting that this budget is just wonderful for our economy and for the people of Ontario, and I think this article alludes to that as well.

Over the past few months, the Liberal Party has been a bit like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. One wrote the budget; the other won the election. And we do wonder who will govern.

At the end of the day, we were hoping for a budget from a PC perspective, from the people whom I represent and I saw at the doorsteps, a budget that would give

hope, that would show people who have actually understood that they've taken us down the wrong track. They've made some very poor decisions. They've made decisions that are hurtful and painful to the people of this great province, and we were hoping to see that they would acknowledge that and step back and say, "You know what? Even with a majority we understand that we have to make a change of direction. We have to do that."

It's not a practical budget. Yes, there's going to be some spending and yes, that hopefully will ensure that there are some jobs created out there, but you can't continue to spend more than you bring in and not raise taxes somewhere down the road. That's probably going to come at us, and we just need to make sure that the people of Ontario understand that.

The other thing I heard loud and clear at the door—from small businesses, medium businesses and large businesses, as well as the employees—was the pension plan. At first blush, it sounds like a wonderful thing, and I'll give the Liberals credit—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would ask that the members respectfully tone it down just a little bit. I'm having difficulty hearing the speaker, and he does deserve the right to have the floor for the debate. Thank you very much.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure they're hanging on every word, really. Hopefully they're at least listening to a few of those words.

This pension plan, while it sounds admirable—what's the word?—"aspirational," as I think we've heard in here for a number of weeks before the budget. It's great to think that you're going to get a pension, but at some point people have to pay for this pension. It's not right to tell people that you're going to take 1.9% of their existing paycheck to do something that they may wish not to do. At the end of the day, a lot of the people were telling me, "I don't have money at the end of my budget, with the increased hydro costs, with the increased cost of consumer goods because of this government, because of the gasoline prices. I don't have any money, or I would be putting it into an RRSP." If they don't have it and they didn't have it, how are they going to have it today, miraculously? Now you're taking 1.9% of their disposable income, which they're now not going to be spending in the economy. They're not going to be buying consumables that again create jobs and allow our economy to expand.

The employers are saying, "This is an additional tax. You can name it whatever you want, but this is an additional tax." And I've already had some saying, "It's going to be the final nail in my coffin. You're going to run me out of town, like the other 300,000 manufacturing jobs that we have lost in this great province under this Liberal reign of terror." We need to ensure—

Interjections.

Mr. Bill Walker: At the end of the day, I can only say what's true. I have to be able to use terms that the general public shares with me. All I was doing was repeating, and those were their exact words. It has been a reign of

terror under this government. They're decimating our province. They're going to bankrupt us. We're not that far off from Detroit. People say, "That will never happen." Yes, it will happen. In fact, it has happened. Talk to the people there.

The people whom I am most concerned about—because I truly, truly care about people. That's the reason I got into this job, as did most of my colleagues on all sides of the House: to make this province a better place. When I stand here, I'm not being critical for any specific nature other than I do think there have been some bad decisions made. I want to be helpful.

This morning I offered, I think, a good thought process to the Minister of Agriculture, and I'm hopeful—I'm really hopeful—that he'll step up and show some action on that file. It's a good way to show that we can work together. I'm glad to see that he has actually taken on full-time responsibility, because before we had a part-time ag minister. So that's a step in the right direction. I think that the minister is sincere in what he's saying as he's prepared to work on that file, as is the Minister of Health for my Markdale hospital. But at the end of the day, words don't help people. What we need to see is action. We need to see a budget that is actually going to deliver. They're going to spend, as I've said at the very outset, more than any other province in our Confederation. We want effective use of dollars, we want to make sure that they're accountable, and we want a government that, when they say, "I'm going to do this," at the end of the day have done it. In many cases, that isn't the case.

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A number of years ago in their budget, they had \$40 million earmarked for nurses. A couple of years after, 1% of that had been spent on actual hiring of nurses and providing front-line care. So again, I'm a little bit reticent to believe there has been a massive change in their thought process. I have concern that they're going to deliver on those types of things and they're not going to create more administration, more bureaucracies like the LHINs, like the OPAs that we've been talking about here for two and a half years. The OPA went from six to 12 people to 300 people. I'm not certain what they really do for the benefit of Ontarians, but I certainly know what happened to the energy budget and the cost at the door to the people who are paying the freight.

We needed a budget that gave hope and ensured that we live within our means. I think we all understand the concept of not spending more than you bring in, particularly if you're borrowing against the children and grandchildren; the age of the pages sitting in front of you, Speaker, are who we need to be thinking about. We need to be thinking about those special-needs folks out in all of our communities. Social services, as I say, is my critic portfolio now. Those people have not received increases since the 1990s. There are more people needing the services and yet we're not doing much to help those most needy. We're not lowering prices for the people who are out there struggling from day to day and paycheque to paycheque, while yet we are imposing things on them like this RPP.

We need to ensure with every single budget, every single dollar and every single line item of this budget that there are people at the very forefront of every thought process we have, and if it's not helping people and providing better and more services, then it shouldn't be there. We need to ensure that we live within our means. We need to ensure that a budget is going to be for the benefit, in the long term, of our province. We need to ensure that in the short term it's going to do some things for our province. I'm just not certain—although all the platitudes we heard yesterday were that we're going to give, we're going to spend, we're going to spend, we're going to respond, we need to make sure we have a budget that is actually truly going to put us on the right track.

We need to turn around the province now that is currently going downwards. We're losing, again, between 300,000 and 600,000 jobs in our province. For 90 months now, I think, we've had the highest unemployment in the country. That's deplorable, Mr. Speaker. You've had huge hits in your great riding. We need to be turning this around and creating the environment so that businesses want to remain in Ontario, first and foremost. We certainly want those in Ontario to expand. We want them to hire more workers. And we want to look attractive to other companies that would locate to our great province of Ontario. As our interim leader alluded to, the concern of the bond rating agencies could actually trigger higher interest rates. If that happens, why are you going to come here as opposed to another province?

I spoke on this at length on the campaign trail with people. We're spending half a billion dollars a year with 0.5% interest. Some say it will go to \$3 billion if we go up one percentage point. That's \$3 billion that would not be going to seniors, to home care, to special-needs children, to people for their drugs. We've heard in here over and over of people with need of special drugs for their ailments, and yet the government typically says no, no, no, and they find some bureaucratic, administrative reason why they won't do that, as opposed to trying to find a way to move forward.

And yet this budget, again, was a bit of pixie dust, saying, "We'll be all things to all people. We'll ensure that everyone gets more." That's admirable from the perspective of the person who wants more, but at the end of the day, you have to be able to pay your bills. I teach my two boys, Zachary and Benjamin—Zach's going to be 20 shortly and Ben just turned 17—that there is no free lunch in this world. You've got to go out and earn your living. You've got to live within your means. You have to spend within practical realities. They all want, as we all do, nice, new, shiny, glossy things. My son keeps telling me he wants new golf clubs, and I say, "I want a golf course, but that doesn't mean I get one tomorrow unless I'm going to go out and work hard and find a way to buy that." So, similar to him: Go out and work hard. Live within your means. Pay your brother back before you go out and buy that new golf club. It's the same thing—

Interjection.

Mr. Bill Walker: Yes. "Careful with golf clubs," Mr. Yakabuski says.

We need to ensure that we are setting that culture for the generations that are following. If we're setting the bar here with our spending, which the Liberals have done over their 10-year reign of terror, then what do we expect of the next generation? They just keep ratcheting up and just think this money grows on trees. It's not reality. It saddens me when I see how much money—the third-largest expenditure of this Liberal government, and they didn't change it in this budget, is paying interest on the debt, the money they are borrowing against our children and grandchildren. It's deplorable that we would say that. It's larger than the whole sector of social services. Community Living folks, children's aid societies. All of the groups that I meet with on a very regular basis in my riding and across the province in my critic roles are telling me that there are more and more people needing more and more services. And yet we're not taking any of that money away from the debt that could be applied back to the front lines, that could be giving these people a hand up, that could be doing some retraining, that could be giving them that extra couple of hours of service in their homes. A lot of seniors—and I applaud the new direction of going to home care as opposed to everyone having to go to the hospital that would have happened 30, 40, 50 years ago, but there also have to be the dollars there to provide those supports if we're going to leave those people at home and not give them the care in something like a hospital or a clinic that they have become accustomed to.

Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day I want a budget that is actually practical and realistic. I was really hoping that they would come out this year and say, "You know what? We've run this structural deficit." They've been talking about the recession. Come on. At some point, step up to the plate. You've been in power now for 10 years, and you're going to have another four-year reign. You need to be making decisions, strategic decisions, decisions with compassion, absolutely, but decisions that get this province back on the rails to success, that ensure that we're creating jobs and we're creating the business climate in which companies want to create jobs so we actually have more people coming to Ontario than leaving.

Right now probably the biggest industry out there is the Liberal moving vans, moving people out of this province. There's a mass exodus of people heading west into other provinces. We have to turn that around. The only way to do that is to either lower your spending or increase your revenues. They've said, although I'm not certain again we can trust them, there will be no new tax increases. Well, then, the only other alternative, if you're not going to do that, is to lower spending, and we didn't see that in this budget.

So, yes, I do have misgivings about the budget. I hope to see some benefit from some of the spending that they're going to do, because no doubt they will spend. At the end of the day we need to make sure we stop that, we turn this train around and we become, again, the leader of Confederation.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'll finish and turn it over to my colleague, the duke—Haldimand—Norfolk.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Further to this budget motion debate, a few days ago I had an opportunity to rise in question period, with a question to the Premier. In three years this government is predicting a zero deficit. However, the hand-picked economist hired by this government, Don Drummond, is projecting a \$30.2-billion deficit in three years. Again, my question to the Premier: How do you square a \$30.2-billion discrepancy? To me, that's the essence of this July budget debate: a \$12.5-billion shortfall today and three years down the road a \$30.2-billion shortfall.

So Drummond says \$30.2 billion in the red three years down the road; Ms. Wynne says it will be zero. Speaker, I find that really quite a spread.

To date, the Premier, her finance minister and the Treasury Board president have really presented nothing by way of a plan, yet alone any specific measures to halt the deficit spending that we've been seeing of late using borrowed money, the deficit spending we've been seeing for close to 11 years now. Now we hear talk of asset sales—nothing too concrete on that as well. I don't object entirely to that kind of a notion. It's something you do when you have to pay down, for example, a very large debt. You don't sell assets just because you can't meet your operating expenses, or you don't sell assets to try and lower your deficit. We've seen asset sales in my riding. Both Haldimand county and Norfolk county have sold their power authorities to Hydro One. We see a situation now where the province may sell part, or some of the assets anyway, of Hydro One.

There are some assets that have been built over many, many decades courtesy of people's electricity bills. You've got to pay those bills. I don't think people were paying their bills on the understanding that the Ontario government, once it gets in trouble with its operating expenses, at minimum, let alone the debt, would be selling off what has been built up over many, many years. That's certainly not the way we prefer to see people run their family finances.

However, we do recognize that governments, like families, have to pay interest on the money they borrow. That's something you have to do. At the end of the year, this debt, we know, is going to come in at something like \$289 billion. The interest on that debt: \$11 billion this year alone. Again, as we've heard during this debate, that's \$11 billion that's not going to health, to education, not being allocated to the most vulnerable in our society. I might point out the debt was half that amount when this government took power back in 2003. Hence that oft-quoted phrase "Dalton the Debt-Doubler" comes to mind. That's the legacy of Mr. McGuinty.

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Now, Speaker, time will tell what interest rates, or what the debt servicing charges are going to be on the debt three years hence, when we hear the projection of a

zero deficit, when we hear a projection of a \$30.2-billion deficit. The projection for the debt in fiscal year 2017-18 is \$411.4 billion. That's the debt we'll be looking at. That's the debt that coming generations will be looking at as well.

Back to my question to the Premier. The President of Treasury Board responded, acknowledging that the deficit in three years will be \$30.2 billion if nothing is done. I'm mindful, and I would be quoting King Lear, as I recall, "Nothing will come of nothing: speak again."

We need more information. We, in the opposition, continue to ask for that information. We'd like to know—this just came up from the last speaker—will it be asset sales? Will it be jacking up taxes on the middle class? Will it be cutting spending? That means cutting government programs. That means cutting government jobs.

Either way, in that final year—and three years is not very far away—you have to take a \$30.2-billion deficit down to zero. I don't think you're able to do that, personally.

Moody's Investors Service have downgraded the outlook for the province of Ontario's debt from stable to negative. They gave a reason: "After several years of weak to moderate economic growth, and higher than previously" indicated "deficits projected for the next two years, the province is facing a greater challenge to return to balanced outcomes than previously" indicated.

According to the 2014-15 budget, Ontario's net long-term debt will increase—just over the course of this year—from \$269 billion to the \$289-billion deficit I mentioned earlier. The budget indicates the government will be paying \$11.271 billion in interest on that debt. But when you hear about a credit rating downgrade—I gave the example of Moody's—that would suggest to the lenders that higher interest rates could be in order, and indicating that higher interest rates on, for example, \$250 billion in provincial debt securities.

So if the interest rate increased to 4.9%—that would be a 1% increase—the province would need to pay roughly not \$11 billion and change, but \$14 billion and change on interest payments on the debt, an increase estimated at \$2.89 billion. That's just in one year, Speaker.

I mentioned earlier today that interest on the debt is already the third-largest expenditure of the Ontario budget after health and education, just before all the money we spend on social services. Secondly, these interest payments on the debt are the fastest-growing expense of this provincial government, growing by 8% a year.

During question period, MPP Ted Arnott, the member for Wellington-Halton Hills, pointed out that over the next three years, debt interest costs will go up 8% each and every year. Again, the average citizen in Ontario does not accrue that money, that \$11 billion a year that is being paid out.

So here we are. We're on the heels of a credit rating downgrade. The speech from the throne touted 10 years of \$130 billion in public infrastructure spending. They

had a quote to justify this, a quote from the former Bank of Canada governor, David Dodge, that "with low interest rates, it is the right time for governments and the private sector to invest in infrastructure."

David Dodge left the Bank of Canada, I think, in 2008. There are people predicting, certainly in the United States, that the low interest rate bubble may well burst. Here's an opposing opinion, another opinion, from economist Jack Mintz—that "if interest rates which have been at a 20-year low, rise, that" debt "burden would become significantly heavier.... [I]f interest rates rise to historical norms, each point increase in interest could add a minimum of \$3 billion in annual interest payments." Jack Mintz goes on to say, "That would severely cripple Ontario's ability to deliver services."

With respect to today's economic status, the fiscal status of this government is reflected in the budget we just received, and without attempting to be melodramatic, I do suggest that many of us lie awake at night wondering, is this province approaching the edge of an economic apocalypse? We saw this before; we saw this in the Bob Rae days.

I kind of summarize this as the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse—in this case, debt, taxation, energy, of course, and red tape. They're all galloping in tandem. They're under a four-horse hitch, if you will, of wasteful spending and scandal. Now, we traditionally think of famine, war, pestilence and death as the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. These have occurred, obviously, over the past 9,000 years of recorded history. I feel people in the province of Ontario have little concern with these issues right now, but I do particularly consider the province's debt—again, in my view, caused by wasteful spending—as the first horseman, looming over several generations of people in Ontario.

This is debt not caused by lack of government revenue. We do not have a revenue problem in the province of Ontario; we have a spending problem—a wasteful and irresponsible spending problem. We now know this government plans to add \$12.5 billion to this government debt in this fiscal year alone. At this rate, we'll probably surpass Don Drummond's prediction of a \$411.4-billion debt in fiscal year 2017-18. At some point—and I think many have done this—you've got to sit down with your kids and explain some of this stuff to them, because they're going to inherit these kinds of problems.

The second horseman is big taxes. Big taxes fund big government. Big taxes fund big government public sector unions. This year's budget is projected to hike taxes by \$3 billion. Again, high taxation rates inevitably are correlated with high spending rates, much of it in that wasteful spending category. Over the past 11 years I have witnessed, first of all, the largest income tax increase in the history of Ontario; secondly, the largest consumption tax increase in the history of Ontario—all of these from a gentleman, the Liberal leader of the day and then the Premier of the day, who came on our television screens, looked us square in the eye and indicated to us, "I will not raise your taxes."

Interjection.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Well, it's unfortunate. I remember watching that on television. He lied to us. It was blatant, in that sense. I don't know why we let that go by.

The tax horseman is out of control. Energy prices, in particular electricity, have brought Ontario's consumers and industry to their knees. Electricity-intensive industries are closing up shop. Homeowners who heat with electricity, many of them down in my riding, are burning an awful lot of wood in the winter, and they're not using their air conditioning in the summer. For this reason, I consider, in this case, the highest energy bills, the highest electricity bills in North America as the third horseman of our economic apocalypse—again, no help in sight. This budget did not seem to dwell on the price of electricity.

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As with debt and high taxes, much of the reason for the high electricity bills is overspending by government agencies—we think of OPG; we think of Hydro One. Large electricity consumers in this city, Toronto, pay twice what people pay in Montreal, Winnipeg and Chicago. In the United States, energy prices are falling because of shale gas. Yet, in Ontario, the government says that prices will rise yet another 46%. So there's something wrong here as well, Speaker.

The fourth and final horseman of Ontario's approaching economic apocalypse, in my view, comprises the myriad rules and regulations, the forms that one has to fill out, forms and red tape—bureaucratic red tape, unnecessary red tape—that suffocates farmers and suffocates business and consumers alike. There are so many regulations, I think many have lost count. There's, again, quite a range in the figures. The government estimates something like 365,000 separate regulations. I know the Toronto Star, several years ago, ran a story indicating 500,000 rules in the province of Ontario. Again, unnecessary bureaucratic red tape is, by an accounting definition, wasteful spending. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business tallies the cost, again, at something like \$11 billion a year just for the private sector.

Obviously, it's time to pull in the reins on wasteful spending and on the four horsemen, as represented in my view, by debt, taxes, high energy costs and red tape. The alternative for Ontario and our coming generations will not be pretty. Again, we need look no further than jurisdictions like Greece; Sacramento, California; or Detroit to see where our future may lie.

I'd like to close with talk about deficit and the debt. It's something I feel we do need to repeat almost endlessly. Deficit, as we know, is a net addition to the debt in one year. The debt is how much we've borrowed over the total of many, many years. Essentially, the debt is nothing more than accumulated deficits. I wanted to mention that because people lose sight of that on occasion. Just a bit of history: It took 23 Premiers and 136 years to accumulate a debt of \$139 billion. It took Dalton McGuinty, along with his successor Kathleen Wynne, only 10 years to double the debt to \$289 billion by the end of this year. Simply put, we continue to see

budgets, as with the one we heard yesterday, that spend far more money than they take in. I'll wrap up by saying—and I think every family and every business in Ontario knows this—that that situation is not sustainable.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm sure there is going to be a debate here—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I know there's going to be a debate, Mr. Speaker. I'm just going to get—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the member from Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, as we are—there we go. I know that I want to get up on a point of order to point out that this white-coloured paper over here has got writing on it.

Oh, excuse me. I noticed somebody is here. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the leader of the third party.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the indulgence. I want to thank my House leader for his creativity, if I can.

I am pleased to rise this afternoon, on behalf of New Democrats, to lead off our debate on the 2014 budget motion.

Speaker, I think it's clear that the people of Ontario have heard quite a bit about the budget in the last number of days. They've heard quite a lot about the budget. A lot of things have been said by many people over the last couple of days about this budget—in fact, probably over the last couple of weeks and maybe even over the last couple of months we could say that the people of Ontario have heard about this budget or at least bits and pieces of this budget, depending on who's talking about it, Speaker, of course. They've heard the Premier read his list of promises, as we like to call them, and they've heard the Liberals come up with all kinds of ways to describe their various plans. They have told us that of course their budget is a progressive budget. Ontarians have been told by the Liberals that this is the most progressive budget that has ever been tabled in this Legislature ever on earth, and it's something Liberals crow about constantly. They been told that this is as good as it gets, that this is the only kind of budget you can have in Ontario. It's as good as families could ever hope for. It's the best thing since sliced bread, and it's sliced bread with the word “progressive” all over it.

A budget is about more than just spin, and what we've heard over the last number of months—since May, probably—is really good spin by the Liberals about their budgets. Budgets are more than spin, however, and they're more than just a first glance. They're more than just a surface kind of picture. They're actually much more important than that, and it's more than just the story that the Liberals choose to tell. It's more than just the tale that Liberals choose to weave for the people of Ontario.

The budget is as much about the fine print, Speaker, as it is about the headlines. In fact, I would submit to you, the members of this chamber and the people of Ontario that the budget is in fact far more than just the headlines. In fact, the budget isn't even the headlines. The budget is definitely about the details, and we all know what's in the details. The devil is in the details, and likewise with this budget.

This budget is definitely in fact, not this budget but any budget is about setting out priorities and choosing amongst priorities. It's about presenting a plan that either addresses the biggest challenges of our province and our families or fails to address those challenges. When you look at this particular budget, and when you take a real hard look at this budget, you see that there's a big difference between the Liberal spin or the Liberal weave and the fine print.

As the Globe and Mail wrote just today, and I quote, there is "a very wide gap" between the Premier's rhetoric "and the actual budget itself." This isn't a surprise to New Democrats. We've known this for some time, but it's good to see that there's finally some clarity around what this budget means for Ontario families. This is not a budget that puts families first or makes life more affordable and more fair for the people of this province. Not at all, Speaker. To quote today's editorial in the Globe, despite all the hot air about this being a progressive plan, again the quote, this "is an austerity budget." Scratch below the surface and this budget doesn't look progressive after all. Scratch below the surface and you find some pretty concerning plans at the heart of this government's roadblock.

Interjections.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I hear the murmurs coming from the other side. I would advise the Liberal members to read their budget and actually acknowledge for the good people of Ontario that in fact the job of opposition is to actually shed light on the plans of government, and that's what we are doing: We're shedding light on the plans of this government that are contained in that budget. In fact, when you open that drape or unshroud the budget from the rhetoric that Liberals have painted it in—that red paint, I guess you would call it—you'll see a budget that is not in fact progressive at all, and that's something that is quite worrisome for New Democrats.

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This is a budget that includes plans for a complete fire sale of public assets, and it aims to fork over new giveaways to the biggest corporations in our province. It's a budget that delivers on a private pension plan, a Harper-style private pension plan, this year. So this year, Ms. Wynne found her way to buddy up with Mr. Harper when it comes to making sure that banks and insurance companies are happy about retirement income of Ontarians that they can get their fingers on. They've said, "Yeah, sure, we'll open the doors in Ontario to that kind of pension plan, and guess what? It's so important, it's the first thing we're going to do when it comes to retirement savings for Ontarians. We're going to make

sure that the banks and the insurance companies get first crack because we're going to buddy up with Stephen Harper and we're going to make sure PRPPs, private pension plans, come to Ontario sooner rather than later." Those wishes of Stephen Harper and the big banks are being fulfilled by the Premier and her progressive team of Liberals over there. But what it also does is it leaves people waiting for a public pension plan and wondering if they'll ever even see that public pension plan in their lifetime.

Let's just get an idea here of what we're talking about. Banks and insurance companies that want Stephen Harper pensions are getting them this year. People who can't make ends meet now and who have no hope of making ends meet when they're in their retirement years are going to have to wait to some point in the future for a public pension plan that actually respects their savings and doesn't gouge them with all kinds of administrative fees and costs. That's something that's going to have to wait to maybe 2017; I suspect much later than that, seeing the track record of Liberal promise-breaking that we've seen over a decade in office that this government has shown the people of Ontario. But we will wait and see.

I think the important thing, though, is to acknowledge that today the priority for Liberals in their budget is PRPPs, Stephen Harper-style pensions, as opposed to public pension plans, which are kicked down the field to 2017.

What else? This budget forecasts cuts that are cuts we have not seen in the province since the days of Mike Harris. I have watched many times the Liberals across the way stand up in their space and rue the days of Mike Harris and talk about how terrible those days were and talk about how they're doing everything they can to take us to a place where those cuts are no longer felt here in Ontario, to kind of make up for that time when that party was in office under that leadership.

In this very budget, Speaker, this Liberal government is primed to bring forward cuts that we have not seen in this province since the ones we saw when the Harris government was in office, cuts that put front-line public services and good jobs at risk. It's a budget that promises to make it back to balance at some point but refuses to tell us what will be sold off and which services will be contracted out and how many jobs are going to be cut and lost to actually make that balance happen. It's kind of like a magic act, I guess: "Oh, yes, we're going to reach balance, and just you watch; we're going to wave our magic wand and that balance is going to occur." Well, everybody knows that's not the case. The government itself—both the Premier and the finance minister—has said straight out that cuts are going to happen, that pain is going to happen. They're just not being honest with the public about what that pain is going to look like. They're just not detailing that particular list of what the cuts and the layoffs or firings are going to look like in this province.

It's a budget that is silent, absolutely silent, when it comes to any real action to address some of the very

serious challenges that are facing our families here in Ontario, whether it's soaring hydro bills—and I know other members have talked about this already—or the loss of good-paying jobs for Ontarians to be able to make ends meet. This budget provides no relief to families that are struggling to make ends meet, families that desire a better future and a better job. None of that is in that budget, Speaker. In fact, I think what I've said in the last few minutes overall is that this budget is not at all what it appears to be—not at all.

Today, I'm really glad to have another opportunity to talk about this Liberal government's plans because they aren't plans that put the people of Ontario first and because our job as New Democrats is very important and very clear. We are going to spend some time explaining our concerns and our problems with this budget. The people of Ontario deserve to know what the Liberals have in store for them over the next little while.

New Democrats know that, over the next little while, we have some important work to do. The people have sent us here to do a very, very important job. The people of Ontario know exactly what it is that New Democrats are very good at doing. We're very good at holding governments to account, and we're very good at wading through the Liberal tall tales to get to the facts of the matter. What we are going to do is make sure that we are reassuring Ontarians that New Democrats are here to stand up for them in the Legislature. We are standing up for them, we are going to be putting them first, because that's what we always stand for as New Democrats. We have not moved from that place, and we certainly won't move from that place with our new role here in the Legislature. We stand up for what is right, Speaker, and we stand up for what is fair.

Ontarians have given us that very important job to do: the important job of taking a hard look at the numbers, reading the fine print and holding this government to account. We will do our job each and every day: looking out for families, advocating for families, defending the public interest and making sure that the tall tales told by the government across the way are translated—let's say it that way—into a real picture for the people of Ontario. We'll stand up for front-line services, as New Democrats do time and time again. We will stand up for front-line services for the people of this province, and we will stand up for accountable public spending that puts the priorities of the families of this province first.

That's why New Democrats are speaking out about this Trojan Horse budget, Speaker, where things are not actually what they first appear to be. Why is this a Trojan Horse plan for Ontario? As I said, it looks like one thing on the one hand. It puts on a real good show on the one hand and it comes across as something that it is not. But inside this Trojan Horse budget are all sorts of surprises that the Liberals want to keep hidden, that the Liberals would rather us not talk about and, furthermore, that the Liberals would rather not have the public, Ontarians, know are in that budget. They're tucked away in the backrooms of this building, in the backrooms of Bay Street. That's where they want that information kept.

You scratch below the surface of this Trojan Horse budget and you find regressive plans—regressive plans—that will not work for the people of Ontario. Start asking some direct questions, and the government tries to change the subject and refuses to give a straight answer. I know that my NDP caucus colleagues have been with me in question period for the last couple of days. I cannot get a straight answer from the Premier and we cannot get a straight answer from the finance minister. In fact, when we leave this chamber and we walk out those doors, we go to the media scrums, and I watch as the media tries to get the answers from the Premier, or at least from the finance minister. Again, Liberals refuse to come clean. They refuse to be upfront with the opposition and with New Democrats, and they refuse to be upfront with the media, about what is in this Trojan Horse budget.

The Premier refuses to even repeat what it is that she put in her platform. She refuses to tell us how much she is counting on getting for selling off assets that belong to Ontarians and refuses to tell us what all the items are that are on that chopping block.

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In fact, they tag a number in the budget but refuse to say where that number comes from—\$3.15 billion. Apparently, it's what the Liberals are going to get from selling off assets. But have they told us which assets are going to be sold off? No. When I asked, straight out here in the Legislature to the Premier, which assets were going to add up to that very precise number of \$3.15 billion—it wasn't \$3 billion; it wasn't \$3.5 billion; it wasn't \$4 billion; it wasn't \$2.5 billion. It was \$3.15 billion. It sounds like a pretty precise number to me, and yet we have no idea because they refuse to answer our questions and they refuse to tell Ontarians. They refuse to be upfront and honest about where that \$3.15 billion is coming from when it comes to asset sales. That's not right. It seems to me that that's not right. It seems to me that the right thing to do is to be upfront with the people when you're selling a plan to them called a budget. That's something that's quite disconcerting for New Democrats, because we believe that people do have the right to know and should have the right to know what their government has in store for them when it comes to selling off some of the most important assets that we have.

I think it's sad that we have a Liberal government that actually believes that burning the furniture to heat the house is the right thing to do. Even the Harris government that they moan about so much—that I moaned about so much, frankly, because I thought they did some pretty bad things. But even the Harris government wasn't prepared to do the sell-offs that the Liberals are talking about in their budget.

The last time I looked under “progressive” in the dictionary, the fire sale of assets to heat the house wasn't in there. I think that that's not a progressive thing and I know that's not something that progressives actually believe in. I think the Liberals are having a bit of an identity crisis over there because they like to talk about

progressive things but they certainly don't put progressive things in their budget.

It's a budget that's built on hidden costs and hidden cuts. They're basically putting forward a budget that's got all kinds of hidden nasties inside of it.

New Democrats oppose these hidden costs and these hidden cuts. New Democrats oppose the mass sell-off of public assets owned by the people of this province. The deep cuts that are coming to front-line public services, New Democrats oppose. The new corporate giveaways that aren't guaranteed to create any jobs at all, or at least not here at home, necessarily, here in the province of Ontario—New Democrats oppose that. We oppose the cuts to public health care that we've seen as hospital budgets have been frozen, year over year, the elimination of hundreds of child care spaces in communities across the province. The last time I looked, having a healthy child care system that people can afford, that's licensed, that's available, that's appropriate for the people of this province and the families of this province is a pretty progressive goal.

Liberals instead are shutting down child care centres in at least 18 communities around this province. That is not a progressive thing, not a progressive thing at all. In fact, it was the Liberal government, through its ill-thought-out implementation of their full-day learning program, of their all-day kindergarten program, that created the crisis in the child care sector in the first place. The Liberals have plugged their ears and closed their eyes to the mess that they made in the child care sector, and now the chickens are coming home to roost.

We're being told by the President of the Treasury Board that small communities and rural communities and communities in small-town Ontario are just going to have to buck up. They're not going to have a hospital anymore and they're not going to have child care anymore. They're not going to have most public services anymore because Liberals don't think it's progressive to have those kinds of things available to Ontarians all across the province. New Democrats actually disagree with that in a big way. We think that's the wrong way to go. We think it's shameful that the Liberals have gone in that direction.

Another thing that we oppose: the willingness of this government to put private pension plans and the profits of big banks ahead of real retirement security for Ontarians. I spoke about that already. It's something we're opposed to. We do not think that PRPPs are the right way to go. We don't think that Harper-style pensions are the right way to go. Apparently, the Liberals do. The last time I looked, no progressives across this country think that PRPPs are the right way to go with pensions, but somehow Liberals think that this is progressive. I think they need to do some research as to what is and isn't progressive when it comes to retirement income.

There are hidden costs and hidden cuts, and I've just talked about some of them in this Trojan Horse budget, Speaker. There are costs and cuts that do not serve the people of this province and that New Democrats, frankly, cannot support.

Take the Premier's plan to sell off a wide range of public assets. Yesterday, her Minister of Finance talked about unlocking the value of OPG, Hydro One and the LCBO. These are very profitable assets that help to pay the bills in this province, year over year over year. They're assets that work for the people of our province and that help to fund our health care system, our education system and the public services that all of us rely on time and time again.

But once in a while the Liberals forget that they should be serving the people of this province first. They seem to forget Mike Harris, for example. I'll use Mike again as an example. I hope Mike's not watching. He's going to be mad at me for this, but that's okay. We've never been friends, and so it wouldn't make a difference. They forget Mike Harris and the disastrous sell-off of the 407. You know what? I'm an MPP, like all of the MPPs in this chamber, and to this very day I get calls in my office in Hamilton complaining about the debacle of the 407. This government, this Liberal government, is about to head down that road—excuse the pun—again with this very budget.

Dalton McGuinty got that very same urge, that very same Liberal urge to burn the furniture to heat the house. He proposed a super corporation—do you remember that? Do you remember the super corporation that they proposed, him and Dwight Duncan?—that could be sold in bits and pieces to the highest bidder. So throw everything into the pile and then sell it off in bits and pieces, almost like an auction. Well, the problem is, of course, that once you sell everything off, it's no longer providing the benefit to the people of Ontario. But that's what they thought they could do: Sell it off to the highest bidder, piece by piece, and literally tear apart the fundamental fiscal foundations of this province in terms of revenue generation.

He wanted to raid the best public assets that we own together—the assets that we own together—the assets that all of Ontario owns, that the people of this province own collectively. He wanted to take those assets, raid them and sell them off, auction them off to the highest bidder. And lo and behold, he's back in town and he thinks things are looking pretty darn good these days. But New Democrats didn't let Dalton McGuinty get away with that fire sale of assets and we are not going to let this Premier get away with her own plan to sell assets off from underneath Ontarians. It is the wrong direction for this province and will not happen under our watch.

Now, we know this is her plan, regardless of what she calls it. The fine print in the budget tells us very clearly that this fire sale of public assets is one of the cornerstones of the Premier's plan. We've asked her day in and day out in question period. We've asked her over and over again to be frank about that. We've asked her to tell us how much the Liberals have already cashed in and slotted into the fiscal framework for these assets, because their own platform showed that this government is planning to raise money from asset sales—more money from asset sales than Mike Harris was able to earn with

the sell-off of the 407. It was a bad plan then, Speaker. It was a very, very bad plan, and it is a bad plan now. Whether it's a Conservative plan or whether it's a red-washed Liberal plan, it is still a bad plan to sell off Ontario assets, and New Democrats are opposed to that 100%.

But we're going to keep asking the Premier, regardless of her refusal to answer, about this issue, because it's one more hidden cost in their budget that the government refuses to talk about, because they know that it's not progressive. The real underlying pieces that make up this budget are anything but progressive, because a fire sale of public assets does not serve Ontarians. And it's not the only hidden cost in this particular budget.

The Premier likes to talk about front-line services. She likes to talk about them a lot. But while she's talking about them over here, she's doing the old bait and switch. She's talking about those great public services over here, but her budget is preparing for the biggest public services cuts since Mike Harris. That is a fact, Speaker. That's the old bait and switch, that's the old Trojan Horse. "We'll talk a good game over here, and while you're not looking, we're going to cut all kinds of services out from your communities and the ability of Ontarians to get the public services that they need."

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According to Bloomberg News, this budget foretells "the deepest freeze in two decades"—the deepest freeze in two decades. According to Bloomberg, "the Liberal government would drop spending by the most per person since former Premier Mike Harris won election on deficit elimination in 1995." Now, that's interesting—would drop spending by the most per person since Mike Harris.

This government talks a lot about how much on the cheap they're already doing things. Isn't it this government that always talks about the fact that they have the lowest per capita program spending in the world? They talk about that all the time. A government that brags so much about already having the lowest per capita program spending in Canada is now talking about making it even worse. This budget is going to be like limbo—how low can you go when it comes to program funding for the people of Ontario? I don't think Ontarians voted for an austerity plan, but they sure as heck got one with this Trojan Horse budget—cuts that will rival Mike Harris's cuts. Behind the spin, that's exactly what this budget has in store for Ontarians. And I have to say it again: That is not progressive, Speaker. That is nowhere near progressive, but that is exactly what is below the surface in this particular plan. Even though Ontarians voted against one plan to cut 100,000 educational assistants and teachers and firefighters and personal support workers and others who serve in this province, throughout all the communities; even though Ontarians said no to 100,000 jobs being cut; even though Ontarians said no to austerity, this Liberal plan has exactly that in it.

According to the Liberals' own hand-picked economist, Don Drummond—the very same Don Drummond who was tasked to independently verify this budget's

revenue assumptions—the Liberals will likely slash the very same jobs that the PCs planned to cut. That's what Don Drummond said. He's the guy who verified independently the numbers in this budget, and in the process of that verification, he let it slip that, "Oh, by the by, I wouldn't be surprised if a couple of years down the road, we see 100,000 fewer public servants' jobs in the province of Ontario."

It seems to me that that's exactly what the people of this province rejected, but that's what's inside this Trojan Horse budget. You don't have to take it from me; you can take it from the Liberals' own buddy, Don Drummond, their favourite economist whom they like to task with all these little jobs. Now, they've actually shown themselves for who they are, which is quite interesting. By 2017, Don Drummond wouldn't be surprised, as I said, if over 100,000 front-line public service workers in ServiceOntario, in our schools and in our hospitals are gone.

Yesterday, the finance minister said, "We will continue to cut where we can." When he was asked over and over and over by the media how many job cuts were coming, he wouldn't answer the question. He refused to be up front with the people of this province. But cutting the public service is no way forward for Ontario. It is not how we build this province up; it's in fact how we tear it down, which is why Ontarians voted against that and why New Democrats are opposed to this budget, which is not progressive.

It's about time this government actually came up with a real jobs plan for the people of Ontario. It's shocking that this budget does nothing different when it comes to a jobs plan. It's not in this budget at all. There is no plan whatsoever for a jobs strategy. You can't build this province up if people don't have a job to put a roof over their head. It doesn't make any sense. There is no jobs plan whatsoever in this budget. You can look and look, but all you'll see are more corporate giveaways and the handouts that the Liberals love to give to their friends, even though they should have learned their lessons by now. No-strings-attached corporate giveaways simply do not work. They haven't worked up until now, and they're not going to work in the time frames of this budget that is before us.

Last month, 34,000 people in Ontario lost a job. We've lost 300,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs in this province, Speaker. Employment in our manufacturing sector hit its lowest point since 1976. I was shocked that the Premier joked about that the other day in question period. But what does that mean in real terms? That means that we had the worst performance for manufacturing in nearly 40 years in this province because the Liberals, over the last decade, have done nothing to maintain our manufacturing jobs, to keep them here or, in fact, to attract more manufacturing to Ontario.

They like to say fancy words about advanced manufacturing, but we know that 300,000 manufacturing jobs are gone. They are gone, and that includes the couple of thousand advanced manufacturing jobs that we may have

actually gotten. The fact of the matter is, Speaker, they don't have a plan, and it's by sheer luck that we have any investment whatsoever that comes into this province.

When I pointed it out to the Premier, that crisis in manufacturing and that it's at the lowest point since 1976, here's what she had to say. She actually had the audacity to say, "Believe it or not, a lot has changed in Ontario since 1976." What's that supposed to mean? Do you know what has changed since 1976? In 1976, my father had a manufacturing job. We had a great living. We had a roof over our head. We had a good standard of living. We could go on vacation with our family from time to time. We had to count our pennies, yes, but we had a decent quality of life.

Go to Windsor, Speaker. Go to southwestern Ontario. Go hang out in London for a while. Take a little bit of time in Chatham-Kent. Go down to Sarnia. Go to some northern communities and some eastern Ontario communities. Ask them. Ask them whether they have good-paying jobs. I was shocked during the election campaign, when I was in Peterborough, to find out that their unemployment rate was sitting at 14%—14%, Speaker. I nearly fell off the bus—unbelievable. The government is proud of that record? They think that's a way to build Ontario up, by allowing the good jobs to leave and having no plan to bring new, good jobs to this province? That doesn't build Ontario up, Speaker; that actually makes people very, very worried about the future. That's what I heard when I was talking to families across this province.

But in this budget, the government does nothing to change their ways. They've done nothing at all except to show their arrogance, frankly, with those kinds of comments that the Premier made when I brought her attention to this issue recently. For sure, I believe that good jobs don't have to be a relic of the 1970s. Liberals might think good jobs have to be a relic of the 1970s. They have certainly done nothing to ensure they are not a relic from the 1970s.

As much as ever, all Ontarians deserve and expect the dignity of putting in a hard day's work in exchange for a decent living. That's what Ontarians deserve, that's what they expect, and that's what we should be trying to deliver for them. All Ontarians deserve and expect to be able to work hard, to pay the bills, to help their kids and to get ahead. That is not too much for people to expect in a province like Ontario. It's not too much to ask of the government, and it's not something that a Premier, frankly, should be mocking, Speaker.

Today, there are 300,000 fewer manufacturing jobs than there were in 2003, when the Liberals first came to office. That's their track record in 11 years: 300,000 fewer manufacturing jobs. The sector has shrunk by over 30%. In communities across Ontario, the unemployment rate remains stubbornly high. In Peterborough, Niagara, Windsor and across northern Ontario, unemployment is stuck at or near double digits, depending on which community you're in. Hundreds of thousands of families have lost good-paying jobs, and they can't find any work.

They can't find any job, any single job, that will allow them to support their kids and pay the bills and start rebuilding their lives after the downturn.

1700

That's not the whole story, Speaker. Young people are a whole other story. They are a whole other story, and they're having a pretty darn rough time, too. It's harder and harder to get into a new career or to get that first lucky break and start climbing the ladder. But somehow, some way, this government seems to think that the status quo is just good enough for the people of Ontario.

The government's job record is nothing to be proud of at all, Speaker. In fact, it's a record that tells you that something needs to give, that something needs to change, that something needs to be done differently. It's a record that tells us very clearly that the Liberals' policy of corporate giveaways that they have had in place for years now has simply not done the trick. This is what the Liberal policies of no-strings-attached corporate giveaways have left us with: an Ontario where people are more likely to be out of work. But does this budget contain in it a real jobs plan? Does it contain in it a different direction, a way to actually say to the people of Ontario, "We have found a way forward that will help us to get good jobs back in this province"? Nope. No plan to create new jobs; no plan to turn the ship around; no plan to do things differently; just the same old, same old—corporate handouts, giveaways to their friends.

A real jobs plan would start by recognizing that the handouts have not worked, and they're not even prepared to do that. They're stubbornly sticking behind a plan that has devastated Ontario, that has failed Ontario, year over year over year. A real plan would turn the page on corporate giveaways and corporate tax cuts that were never fair and that haven't worked. That's the big theory, right? You just keep cutting corporate taxes, and the jobs are going to come. We've seen that that doesn't work, Speaker. We've seen time and time again that that doesn't work. Yet the Liberals—I don't even think that's progressive? Do you guys think that's progressive?

Interjections: No.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I don't think that's progressive either, but I guess the Liberals think that's progressive. It certainly doesn't work. It doesn't work. A real jobs plan would target job creation by rewarding job creators. That's what would work. It would reward investment, reward productivity gains, and partner with businesses to help deliver the infrastructure that they need.

Another fund for new giveaways and new handouts is not a real jobs plan, Speaker. In fact, it's one more thing that Don Drummond found to criticize in this government's plans. When he led the Liberal commission on the reform of Ontario's public services, he said that this government's business supports aren't working. Don Drummond said that.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: No.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: He actually said that. You should read his report. I read it. I actually got a briefing

before it was released. He said that the government should start over because business supports need to be focused on driving productivity, and they need much better transparency and accountability. In fact, he wanted a four-year sunset rule on all future business support programs to ensure that they demonstrate their worth, not a new 10-year fund to do the exact same thing that hasn't worked for the last 10 years.

So, he, Don Drummond, finds it "ironic" that this government is adding another new plan to a "hodge-podge"—his words, not mine—of business supports that he didn't find to be working well at all in the first place. At the very moment when families and communities need targeted job creation, this government is offering more of the same and somehow hoping for a different result. We all know what that means, Speaker. When you actually do the same thing over and over, and actually just hope for a different result, it means you're not quite with it when it comes to paying attention to what you're doing.

It's the same jobs plan that put Ontario's unemployment rate above the national average in 2007 and, as I said in question period today, left it above the national average in 2008 and left it above the national average in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013. Now here we are in 2014, and we still have an unemployment rate above the national average here in the province of Ontario, and it is because of the shameful unwillingness of this Liberal government to do anything different on the jobs file and simply allow Ontarians to continue to be underemployed and unemployed and unable to make ends meet. New Democrats oppose a budget that does nothing to create jobs and opportunity for the people of Ontario.

Another hidden cost in this government's budget is health care austerity. The last time I checked—and I seem to get this feedback pretty much every day when I talk to people about the election that took place about a month ago—people didn't vote for austerity. In fact, people voted against austerity. But this government has frozen hospital operating budgets for three years in a row now.

Every day our team comes into question period, and every day there's a bit of a competition about what questions are going to be asked of the government, because people want to get their questions in. They want to speak to the issues in their communities. They want to speak to the issues in their critic portfolios. They want to let Ontarians know about the good work that they're doing on their behalf here in the Legislature. I can't tell you that a day has gone by where someone in our caucus is not making a pitch for a question about health care cuts, particularly the mess in our hospital system. Pretty much every day something comes up where there's a real concern, a real problem, with our hospital system being identified by our MPPs here.

If our MPPs here are getting that from their communities, then I've got to tell you, the other MPPs across this province must be getting the same kind of feedback. What does that feedback look like? Ambulances lined up

a dozen deep that can't offload the patients because the ERs are full and people who can't get through the hospital because there are no beds available because, on the other end, there are people who probably should be in long-term care or at home with home care supports. But those things aren't in place either, so the hospital becomes unable to meet the needs of the patients coming in.

How long have we heard that story? Man, we've heard that story year after year after year after year, and the Liberals still haven't fixed it. But instead of dealing with it, we're seeing the same kind of situation in this budget. The Liberals are going to keep an austerity plan in place for the hospitals. So what are the hospitals doing? We see beds closing. We see them try to get patients out sooner than they need to. I don't know how many communities I've been in where people tell me about the revolving-door syndrome, where a patient has had surgery, or they've been in the hospital for something quite serious, the hospital needs that bed, and so they get that patient out. The supports are not properly arranged or don't exist in the community, and within a couple of weeks, that patient is back in the hospital sicker than they were when they left the week or two before. That's no way to run a health care system in the province of Ontario.

They lay off nurses. They give new nurses a six-month contract and then, guess what? We train the nurses, and they're heading to other provinces and other countries to provide their good nursing skills to people elsewhere because they can't get a decent full-time job here in the province of Ontario. That's the health care system that the Liberals have given us. They're saying, "We're going to do more of the same."

When we say, "Get the home care system up and running; get it fixed so that we can actually have a decent home care system for people," they throw a whole bunch of money in the home care system, and it goes—guess where?—to the administrators. It goes to the executive directors of the CCACs.

How does that make sense? When you put money in a system, it should go to front-line services. It shouldn't necessarily go to the salaries and bonuses of the top administrators. How is that going to help the person who is waiting for home care, who has been on the waiting list for three or four months? It's not. That's the answer: It's not going to help them. But that's the Liberal way. That's how they prioritize the squeezed money in the health care system.

Three years of flatlined spending has meant cuts to nurses, higher user fees—oh, there you go. That's another one, another big one. As hospitals are trying to figure out how the heck they're going to make their budget, they're doing all kinds of things. I talked about closing beds and laying off nurses and laying off all kinds of other folks. They're also jacking up parking fees so that patients or visitors of patients in the hospital are actually being gouged when they park their cars so that the hospitals can make their budget bottom lines. It's ridiculous, Speaker. It's kind of like health fees through the back door. Right? It's health fees through the back

door. We're charging people for health care, but instead of actually paying it directly to the hospital, you pay it to the parking meter outside the hospital; that's your health care fee. That's what we have here in the province of Ontario: more fees to park your car, fewer and fewer services that are actually being provided in public hospitals, and more and more moving out to private clinics—many of those private, for-profit clinics. Speaker, that's not progressive and it's not something that New Democrats can support.

1710

That's another one of the reasons why we do not support this budget. New Democrats stand up for health care. We stand up for a health care system that actually meets the needs of the people of this province. Whether it's home care, whether it's emergency room wait times, whether it's proper access to mental health supports, you can't provide better access to services by starving the system and carving out a bigger chunk of that system to private clinics, which is exactly the wrong-headed direction that the Liberals are taking the province of Ontario in. New Democrats will not support a budget that erodes our public health care system, and we will not support a plan that does not address cuts to child care spaces in communities across the province.

New Democrats fought to increase child care spending because we know how hard parents have to struggle to find a safe place for their kids. I don't want to list off the tragedies we've seen in this province where people didn't have safe child care for their kids. We know what that looked like, and we sat here in this place horrified by the examples of what happens when a government does not ensure that there is adequate, affordable, licensed child care in this province. And yet this government has gone backwards on that file. They have made it even harder for families to get that kind of child care.

It does nothing to stop the cuts in those 18 communities that I mentioned at the beginning of my remarks—18 communities that are losing their child care centres. Where are those hundreds of families going to go? What kinds of solutions are they going to have to turn to when their child care centres are closed? How many more of those tragedies are we going to have to learn about in this House because the government does not support child care in the province of Ontario? That's a question that I have, Speaker.

This is an austerity budget. Beneath the surface and the spin, it is not progressive—it is not progressive at all. It is an austerity budget, through and through and through. But beyond all of these regressive plans that New Democrats oppose, beyond the fire-sale of public assets and beyond the worst cuts to public services that we've seen since Mike Harris, this is a budget that fundamentally fails to address the real needs of families in this province. It's a budget that fails to put families first—because you can't address the challenges facing our province by ignoring the realities that our families face day in and day out.

It's not just the hidden costs that we oppose in this budget; we also oppose the government's failure to act on

the issues that matter the most. Every month, folks are seeing their costs go higher and higher. Every month, when their auto insurance bill arrives and when they open their hydro bill, families are floored by how fast costs are going up. Across this province, people are finding it hard to keep up, never mind get ahead. The bills pile up, and lots of families breathe a deep sigh of relief if they manage to even balance the books at the end of one more month. It's a real struggle for folks out there, and too many families just cannot make ends meet anymore.

At a time when too many older workers are losing their jobs, when younger workers are finding it harder than ever to enter the workforce, and when costs are climbing up and up and up, a government has to take those families seriously. Even while life is getting more expensive for people, the government is making perks on Bay Street more affordable. People are being told, "We've got nothing in the cupboard for you. The cupboard is bare. Your costs are going to go up. You're going to pay more in auto insurance. You're going to pay more in electricity costs. Your bills are going to continue to skyrocket. We have other priorities, and those priorities are making sure that new tax loopholes for CEOs and big corporations on Bay Street"—well, they're going to get what they want. They're going to get what they need, Speaker, because of course they're more important than everyday families.

Lots of families wish they could afford to take their kids to a hockey game or a baseball game, but for some reason, the Premier thinks that the priority should be letting CEOs and wealthy corporations write off the HST when they go to a corporate box. Gee, I don't think that's fair, Speaker.

It's our job to actually listen and respond to the real needs of Ontarians, and what Ontarians are telling us is that their concerns should be addressed. Their concerns should be at the top of the list. That's why New Democrats stand up for families who are being squeezed out of the middle class, and that's why we cannot support a budget that does not tackle the very high cost and rising cost of everyday life. It does not take strong steps to get hydro bills and auto insurance rates under control, and it leaves families on their own, literally treading water, month in and month out. It leaves hydro bills going up, killing jobs and hitting families very, very hard. Hydro rates have climbed 300% in this province since 2003 when this government first came to office, and they're set to rise another 42% within the next five years. But the government takes a back seat, content to leave families struggling.

No matter how often the Liberals insist that this is a progressive plan, no matter how red in the face they get trying to spin their story, anyone can see right through this budget. And if you aren't listening to families and you're not addressing the actual challenges they're facing, then you aren't nearly as progressive as you insist you are.

I have to say that putting a priority on opening new corporate tax loopholes when it comes to the HST that help these big corporations on Bay Street write off things

like box seats at sports games, chauffeured limos and those kinds of things, losing close to \$1 billion in revenue annualized, just for that—I've got to tell you, that close to \$1 billion in revenue annualized would provide a hell of a lot of health care in this province and it would certainly save those 18 child care centres from closing in Ontario. I think a progressive person would actually spend the money on the child care and make sure families have safe, decent, affordable child care for their kids, rather than give another CEO another opportunity to write off his HST or her HST on their corporate box seats in a stadium or at a sports field. That's what New Democrats believe.

But let's talk about transit for a minute if we want to talk about progressive versus not progressive. Congestion is costing families and businesses more than \$6 billion a year here in the GTA. We hear this all the time. Businesses are racking up extra costs, and families are losing precious time together because mom or dad is stuck on the road. Transit improvements are needed and they're needed now, and I think everybody agrees.

The planners, in fact, at Metrolinx and at the TTC and at the city of Toronto and in the government's own Transit Investment Strategy Advisory Panel have set out what the priorities should be for that transit investment. Beyond the quick wins and the immediate improvements that are needed, it's time to prioritize the downtown relief line here in Toronto.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That's being progressive.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's not only progressive; it's logical. It makes sense. It's the right thing to do. It's what all of these experts say should be the priority. You have to address the capacity challenges on the Yonge line first before you start bringing more people down on the subway from Thornhill. It doesn't make any sense to build more subway lines up north and have more people coming down to a system that's already bursting at the seams and unable to take the capacity that it has now. It makes no sense whatsoever. Maybe it's a political salvo that the government is trying to do for some political reason, but the bottom line is: Let's deal with the congestion before adding to it.

We need to deliver all-day, two-way GO to and from Kitchener-Waterloo. That investment would support over 33,000 jobs. It's an amazing opportunity. It's a fantastic opportunity. This government that crows about jobs and is proud of their failing jobs plan—well, here's a jobs opportunity that's golden, and yet they used weasel words when they made announcements around the Kitchener-Waterloo all-way, two-way GO, because guess what? It's not all-day, two-way—not at all. And that's shameful, because there is real opportunity in that community for some real job creation and, more importantly or equally important, some real investment. That's certainly one of the things Ontario needs desperately.

1720

We need not only all-day, two-way GO in Kitchener-Waterloo, but we want to see year-round GO service in St. Catharines and Niagara Falls as well, Speaker. That's something that needs to happen. We need to see the

transit system improved in Hamilton with the LRT. All of these things will create jobs throughout the numerous regions of Ontario, which is what we need to see.

Every time I'm in the Niagara region, it's depressing, frankly, to see the amount of job loss that those communities have suffered. They are resilient, wonderful people in the Golden Horseshoe. I come from Hamilton; it's technically part of the Golden Horseshoe. I know that families in Niagara Falls, in Welland, in Thorold, in Fort Erie, in Niagara-on-the-Lake and in St. Catharines—people in those communities have suffered a great deal from job loss. For some reason, the Liberals aren't listening to them when it comes to the importance of having year-round GO service to their communities.

I know that the minister of—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: He's Minister without Portfolio.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Minister without Portfolio, the MPP from St. Catharines, has made the promise, during the campaign apparently, and it was reiterated by the Premier, apparently. Let's make sure that that promise is kept. Certainly it would be the progressive thing to do, to make sure those investments are made.

We need clean trains in downtown urban neighbourhoods, Speaker. Holy smokes! It's something I just can't fathom. How is it that, in this day and age, in 2014, the Liberals are building a dirty diesel train to take people from the airport to downtown? It's a disgrace. It's an embarrassment. They should be ashamed. Guess what? Dirty diesel is not progressive. New Democrats don't support this budget. We don't support dirty diesel trains. We think it's shameful that Liberals think that it's okay to pollute the neighbourhoods along the route of the air-rail link with disgusting diesel fumes. It's shameful, Speaker. We need real timelines and real deadlines for the electrification of that line to make sure that that diesel does not poison the families and the children in those neighbourhoods.

We need accountability, first and foremost, for the dollars spent. But instead what do we see in this budget? It doesn't set out any of these transit priorities. Yes, it makes a new pool of cash by taking gas tax money from health and education and adding over \$3.15 billion from the fire sale of public assets, but it doesn't make any commitment whatsoever to fund or deliver a downtown relief line. All it says about Scarborough transit, Speaker, is that an environmental assessment will begin soon. All it says about regional express rail is that the idea will be studied. It says nothing about the Premier's promise to deliver bullet trains within 10 years not only to Kitchener-Waterloo, not only to London but apparently all the way to Windsor, which we think Windsor deserves. But I think it's a bit of an interesting target that they've set up. Not one word and not one dollar to back up all of that chatter about the bullet train. That's another example of a promise that is not backed up by this budget, a budget that is filled with hidden costs, hidden cuts; in fact, a Trojan Horse budget, Speaker.

I'm going to wrap up my remarks here, Speaker. A Trojan Horse budget is not what this province needs. It is

not going to create the new jobs that our province needs. It is not going to help families get costs under control. It is not going to restore fairness to our corporate tax system, but it is going to do tremendous damage by selling off public assets, by cutting services and by slashing jobs. That's the really story behind this budget. This is a plan that leaves Bay Street better off but leaves folks on Main Street out of work and out of pocket.

Beneath the surface of spin, this is not a progressive plan at all. In fact, it is another Liberal budget that promises the world but delivers something very different. The Liberals have chosen it as their Trojan Horse plan, but New Democrats will not support it, and each and every day we will do our job, the job that Ontarians sent us here to do. New Democrats will stand up and hold this government to account for the costs and the cuts that are hidden inside this Trojan budget plan.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. Further debate?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Congratulations on your appointment as Speaker and—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Sorry. I was a little slow at the draw. I recognize the Minister without Portfolio, the Associate Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to congratulate you on your appointment as Speaker. I'd also like to take this opportunity to congratulate all members on their election to this House.

I'm very proud to rise today to speak to the budget motion, Mr. Speaker. This is our plan for building Ontario up for today, and it is our plan to ensure that Ontario's future is bright and strong.

Our plan takes immediate action to create jobs by investing in a highly skilled workforce, by building much-needed infrastructure and transportation networks, and by supporting a dynamic and innovative business climate.

Our plan would take steps to build the retirement security that Ontario's workers deserve, an initiative that would support long-term economic growth in this province.

Importantly, our plan includes measures to continue managing responsibly to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18.

Our plan includes strategic investments that build on the tremendous competitive advantage of Ontario's people and businesses.

Our plan will create more opportunity and more security for people in every region of our province. As our Premier and Minister of Finance have shown, we are moving forward with our comprehensive and balanced approach to build more opportunity and more security for Ontarians in the global economy. Ontario continues to attract investments that are creating jobs, growing the economy and expanding opportunities for workers, and the people of Ontario are the strength of our province. Their skills, talent, diversity and competitiveness attract investments to Ontario. That is why we are planning to build on the strength of Ontario's people. We will move

ahead to build the potential of every Ontarian: of every child, of every student and of every worker in this great province, and certainly in my great riding of Scarborough-Guildwood. That is what the people expect of us, and that is what we intend to do.

We know that quality education is one of the most important investments we can make in a child's life. In fact, during the campaign, I had an opportunity to meet hundreds of students—thousands, even—and that is what they expect of us. They are our hope, they are our future, and we must continue to invest in their education.

Our plan would see the implementation of full-day kindergarten by September 2014. This would modernize and strengthen our child care system, because every child in Ontario deserves the best possible start in life.

We would invest in classroom technology. I know from visiting the students at St. Malachy school in my riding that this is an investment that they welcome: giving Ontario's youngest learners the tools they need to succeed and making sure that they are prepared to lead in the 21st-century economy.

Ontario remains among the best jurisdictions in North America for talent, training and skills development. With more Ontarians pursuing post-secondary education, the province is helping students achieve their goals. We will be working to make post-secondary education more accessible to more students. This is something that we have to do.

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The 30% Off Ontario Tuition grant will make sure that up to 260,000 young people can afford to get a degree or a diploma in this province. This will lead to more opportunity, and I know that the young people in my communities like Kingston-Galloway, Orton Park, Scarborough Village and all of those communities—those young people rely on that support, and they need those opportunities as well.

There's a program in my riding that is being done by the East Scarborough Storefront and the University of Toronto Scarborough campus. It is bringing the institution closer to the community so that more young people can get involved in post-secondary opportunities.

We will continue to help young people gain skills and experience to obtain stable employment.

Ontario's youth shouldered the brunt of job losses during the recent recession. In fact, this is a problem that persists today, and we need to fix this problem. I know the young people in Scarborough-Guildwood need this support. I meet with them all the time. They continue to face an unacceptably high unemployment rate. Our plan proposes to extend Ontario's Youth Jobs Strategy by giving more young people the chance to find jobs, to start their own businesses, to gain valuable experiences and skills and to build on their working life.

By building on people's talents and skills, we are investing in a brighter future for Ontarians. By bringing together young people with small businesses in my community just last fall, 20 young people found jobs connecting them to the youth employment fund.

Mr. Speaker, our investments in schools, hospitals, transportation and infrastructure have made Ontario a great place to work and to live, but we have to move forward in Ontario to reduce congestion, to invest in roads, in bridges and in transit, to invest in all parts of this province—in our northern communities, in our rural communities as well as in our growing cities. The Building Opportunity and Securing Our Future Act would invest more than \$130 billion in infrastructure over the next 10 years. This is in fact closing an infrastructure deficit that was left by previous governments.

This fund would create employment. It would improve Ontario's productivity and support the jobs and growth of tomorrow. Mr. Speaker, we plan to move Ontario forward by dedicating new funding that would make nearly \$29 billion available over the next decade to build a province-wide transportation network to reduce commute times and to move goods faster to more places. The two funds would be divided fairly across the province, and they would be transparent to the population so that the greater Toronto and Hamilton region would receive \$15 billion for its transportation and transit priorities, and the other regions of Ontario would receive \$14 billion to support their priorities.

We plan to move Ontario forward by investing in strategic infrastructure across the province so that every region and every community in Ontario can benefit from better roads, to better bridges, to better public transit and infrastructure—

Mr. Mike Colle: Sewers: Don't forget the sewers.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Absolutely—and the sewers that run underground.

We are committed to investing \$1 billion to develop strategic transportation in the Ring of Fire to unleash the true economic potential and growth of our northern Ontario region and to extend opportunities for people in the north to reap the benefits of development in an area that for so long has been neglected.

We will keep health care and education strong because we know that our investments in people's quality of life will also continue to strengthen and sustain our economy. This bill would help support major hospital expansion and redevelopment projects with more than \$11.4 billion over the next 10 years. By 2025, Ontario will benefit from state-of-the-art hospital facilities that offer quality services and treatments.

We will invest in our schools to build on Ontario's potential for leadership in the 21st century. We are moving Ontario's education system from great to excellent. Mr. Speaker, we will invest more than \$11 billion over the next decade to continue to build places to learn and to modernize elementary and secondary schools. I know this is very important. I have 45 schools in my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood, and I know that these investments are badly needed. We will expand post-secondary campuses to ensure that we have enough college and university spaces for our young people. Ontario's talented and ambitious young people depend on that.

Mr. Speaker, another part of our plan is to build opportunity and secure our future and investing in strategic

partnerships—strategic partnerships that will produce economic benefits for businesses, for communities and for people. Ontario has built a strong reputation as a hub for global business. Our province is ranked third in North America for foreign direct investment and we have been ranked as Canada's most competitive province and one of the best places for investment and business development. Our focus is to leverage business investment, to foster a climate of innovation and entrepreneurship, and to create high-quality jobs for Ontario's talented workforce—like the aerospace sector. In my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood I have Centennial College. They have partnered with IBM, Bombardier and others to invest in our competitive aerospace sector at their Downsview campus.

Mr. Speaker, this bill includes initiatives that focus on local as well as international partnerships, like expanding trade missions, to increase the number of companies that our companies are exporting to, to help exporters find new and growing markets, and to attract new investment.

Our plan also includes a 10-year \$2.5-billion Jobs and Prosperity Fund that would improve Ontario's ability to attract business investments. With the new fund, the province would have the flexibility to offer strategic incentives to ensure investments, help support growth and create well-paying jobs in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I've talked about what our government is doing to build on the strengths of our people in Ontario. I've highlighted our plan to move Ontario forward with strategic investments in infrastructure and transportation networks. I've also talked about key initiatives to build a supportive and dynamic business environment.

I will now take a minute to explain how our plan will support a strong and secure retirement income system here in Ontario to help ensure that Ontarians are better able to enjoy their retirement years so that this province continues to be the place where people can live, can work, can raise their families and can retire securely.

As we know, the Canada Pension Plan is fundamental to the retirement income security for all Canadians, but its benefits alone are too low to meet the needs of middle-income earners. Several studies have shown that, unless action is taken, many of today's workers may not be saving enough to maintain their current lifestyle in retirement. This is a problem that will grow worse over time as our population continues to age. This is why we plan to introduce the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan to build on the strengths of the CPP. We will combine the CPP payments with the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan so that people will have a more secure and comfortable retirement in Ontario.

The ORPP would provide a predictable stream of income indexed to inflation and paid for a lifetime in retirement, providing comfort and security when people need it the most. It would be mandatory for the more than three million Ontarians without a comparable workplace pension plan, and it would be required to be fair and equal in terms of its contributions from both employers as well as employees, to a maximum of 1.9% each. The

ORPP would be publicly administered at arm's length from government, with implementation led by esteemed former CEO of OMERS Mr. Michael Nobrega.

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We will be consulting with pension experts across the province, with businesses, as well as with labour—

Mr. Mike Colle: And with seniors themselves.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter:—and with seniors themselves, as our member from York West often reminds me, in order to ensure that every perspective is heard as we build the framework for a made-in-Ontario pension plan solution.

We know that voluntary options such as PRPPs and RRSPPs are still important as people save towards their retirement goals, and those options are complimentary to the ORPP that we are proposing. As our population continues to age, ensuring that we protect retirement security for Ontarians is really the smart thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, we understand that our province's success depends on the success of all Ontarians, and we know that when people have the opportunity to achieve their full potential, they strive to achieve that potential. When we promote a fair society, together we will contribute to the prosperity of the province. That is why our plan includes measures to build opportunities and a more fair society.

We are continuing to reform the social assistance system to improve incomes and support and to reduce barriers to entering the workforce. We are proposing legislation to index the minimum wage to inflation to help ensure that workers receive a decent wage. This is after having raised the minimum wage to \$11 per hour as of June 1, 2014.

We're also proposing to remove the debt retirement charge from residential users in our electricity bills after December 31, 2015. This would save a typical residential ratepayer about \$70 per year.

Our plan includes enhancing supports for adults with developmental disabilities and front-line workers in the community services sector. Our plan also includes providing support for wage increases for home care workers in the publicly funded home care and community care sectors. This is so important to Ontario's seniors and those most in need of this service. I want to thank the minister responsible for seniors for continuing to keep us focused on the needs of seniors in Ontario.

We are also investing in front-line child care workers. I've already talked about the importance of our earliest learners and our young people. Our plan includes increasing the Ontario child benefit by proposing to index it to inflation to help children reach their full potential. I know how essential this is for families who need it, even in my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood. These measures would help build more opportunities for Ontarians and to promote a fairer province for all people.

So much has been said about our fiscal health. Mr. Speaker, we are committed to eliminating the deficit by 2017-18. Our budget lays out the path to balance by responsibly managing spending and investing strategic-

ally in new growth. We are committed to transparency, efficiency and accountability across government to help us move towards our pre-recession debt-to-GDP levels. Our plan includes measures to build towards fiscal balance, such as extracting more value from the province's assets.

With the help of an advisory council led by retiring group president and CEO of the TD Bank Mr. Ed Clark, we are going to continue to take on those challenges of ensuring that we leverage those assets.

We are the leanest program spending government in this country, and our efforts have resulted in lower-than-forecasted program spending expenses for the last five years in a row.

Our plan includes strategically investing in people, in infrastructure, and in business partnerships to create growth for today and for tomorrow while still providing high-quality public services that support the well-being of Ontarians.

Mr. Speaker, I've reviewed all of the areas that have been highlighted in our budget. What is important to us is that we continue to ensure that not only do we have a province that is championing to build Ontario up, but we also have a federal government that is playing its part in ensuring that there is fairness for Ontarians.

We know that when we are working together as one Ontario, we are supporting people in every part of this province, this great province—

Mr. Mike Colle: Especially Scarborough.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Especially Scarborough–Guildwood.

I want to thank you, Speaker, for this opportunity. I look forward to all members supporting our budget.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's a pleasure to get up to respond to the talk opposite.

I hear the budget, and I heard people during the election in my riding, businesses, talking about trying to hold on. In our province, we see the cost of doing business is no longer competitive. We talk about, for instance, the car industry. Just 10 years ago, we had the number one car-producing industry in North America. Now we're number three. We hear warnings every day about the cost of doing business here just getting out of sight.

The Ontario pension plan—their own ministry estimates talk about a loss of 150,000 jobs that that has brought in. The warning signs are there. We have to make it so that we can compete.

It's fine to have the minimum wage jobs, and it's fine to have them indexed, but here on the PC side we aspire to better jobs for people in Ontario. The manufacturing jobs are very good jobs. They were high-paying jobs, people working with their hands. We've seen a loss of 300,000 of these jobs and growing. Just last week, again, in my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, we lost another company, another 50 jobs. It was another 200 jobs just as the election started—Philips Canlyte. All

these companies are not closing their doors; they are moving south, and they are moving because they have greater capacity down there. Why do they have greater capacity? Because it's cheaper to do business. They don't have the high taxes.

We have a seniors population in this province that is ranked, as far as poverty, one of the tops in the world as being able to save money.

At this time in our fragile economy, we hear the experts telling us that it's just not the time to bring this in.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? I recognize the member from London—Fanshawe.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thank you, Speaker, and I want to congratulate you on your position as deputy speaker in the House. This is the first time I've had an opportunity to stand up in the House and speak, so welcome back to everyone that's here.

I'm glad to stand here today to talk about the budget, because it's really something that's extremely important. The Liberal government found the forethought that they have called us back here to talk about this budget, and that's what New Democrats are here to do, Speaker. But we actually want to point out that this budget is not a progressive budget, as the Liberals are claiming. It's definitely an austerity budget.

We've talked about the fact that there is no jobs creation plan in this budget that makes sense, because I can tell you, in my riding of London—Fanshawe we had layoffs before the House rose, or before the election was called. Kellogg's, a cereal manufacturer in London, is closing its industrial building. When I was on the election trail, I met people. This one gentleman was going to be losing his job. His brother had a job there, his sister-in-law had a job there, he had a job there. Basically, his whole family was going to be devastated by the closure of Kellogg's.

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This government doesn't listen about a jobs plan. It keeps rewarding corporations with tax loopholes, and they should be rewarding corporations when they actually create a job so that people can stay in their own city, have a livelihood and continue to save for their retirement. They were talking about retirement packages; if you don't have a job, you can't save for retirement. If you don't have a job, you can't put that money back into your community.

I really have an issue with the fact that this is not a progressive budget. It's a budget of austerity with no jobs plan that's going to help people in London.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? I recognize the member from Durham.

Mr. Granville Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to commend you on your appointment as Acting Speaker.

It's a pleasure for me as a Liberal member to stand up and support this budget. It's a budget that I ran on and

it's a budget that my government ran on. It's a budget that the people of Durham embraced. They embraced this budget because it attends to the needs of the people and it's a budget that builds Ontario up. It's a budget that affects our young people. It provides opportunity for them and helps them in areas of skill development. It also is a budget that makes one of the greatest education systems in the English-speaking world even better. So it's a progressive budget in that sense. Our young people realize that and they voted for that.

It's a budget, also, that helps infrastructure grow. It's a budget that will create jobs because of the infrastructure—\$29 billion. That's going to create jobs. It's going to bring transit to regions such as Durham. It's going to improve transit and help the gridlock in the GTA.

By and large, this is a budget that is going to help all Ontarians. It's going to help our elderly by providing the services that they will require. Nurses will be there for them; they'll have PSWs.

There are provisions in this budget that help to increase the salaries of our PSWs. I didn't realize that they were paid so little, and our elderly rely so much on them for services. I am shocked that the NDP did not support that, even—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you.

I recognize the speaker from Elgin—Middlesex—London.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm glad to comment on the speech given by the Associate Minister of Finance. I'll just relay a few points that she sugar-coated, basically.

The first part is to remove the debt retirement charge, and of course they're saying it about residential homes. However, this government continues to neglect the farmers in our area, who will continue to pay this debt retirement charge, with their higher energy rates already costing their businesses much more. They will, in fact, be adding to their costs by paying down the debt retirement charge, which this government has slowly frittered away into other accounts. This debt retirement charge should have been paid off years ago. However, this government is unaccountable and has done away with billions of dollars.

I'd also like to make a comment on the pension plan that the associate minister has brought forward. I believe her brother works in St. Thomas—and I think that he's at Presstran, is he? Or is he at Formet?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Yes.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Presstran, yes, and I'm glad he's part of my community.

However, he works for Magna, and Magna has said, without any argument at all, that they will stop investing in Ontario if this government goes forward with their pension plan and with their high energy rates. Well, we can't stop the energy rates; a 42% increase is coming our way, whether we like it or not. This is the plan of the government. However, they do have an opportunity to postpone this Ontario pension plan and let the people of Ontario, the people who work for Magna, who work for Formet and work for Presstran, have some hope that their

businesses will still be here, that their jobs will still be here in the long run—because once a company stops investing in their factories, it's only a matter of time, when the retooling comes forward, until they are unable to continue, and that's when they shut down plants and move elsewhere.

St. Thomas, Ontario, since 2007, under this government, has lost over 6,000 jobs, out of a population of 37,000. I would hate to see our Magna and Presstran companies, which probably have over 2,000 more employees, have to leave St. Thomas because this government is going forward with the Ontario pension plan, which itself has said will lose over 150,000 jobs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member for her response.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you so much, Speaker. I want to thank the members for their comments: the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, the member from London–Fanshawe, the member from Durham and the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London.

So many of the comments were centred around jobs and the auto sector. You mentioned my younger brother, who works in the subsidiary of Magna. Our two older brothers also work in the auto sector, so my family is very much connected to that.

But I also know that the investments we're making in the skills and in the talents of our young people are preparing them for the jobs of the future, and that includes advanced manufacturing and it is ensuring that

Ontario's economy remains competitive and can provide those good, well-paying jobs well into the future. We know that when we are working together as one Ontario, when we support people in every region of this province, we will have a brighter and stronger future.

The 2014 budget is our plan to build on people's talents and their skills—like our investments in hard-working PSWs, who really deserved that pay raise—and to build modern infrastructure and transportation networks and a dynamic business environment. It's a plan to help families build a more secure retirement. If we do nothing, people will still grow old and they will require those supports. So we have to take action and we need to build a more fair society. We also need to be balanced and eliminate the deficit by 2017-18, as our plan requires.

I urge all members of this House to support our plan and support our budget so that we can work together to build a stronger Ontario and a stronger Canada. I look forward to their support of this budget.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Since it is almost 6 o'clock, this House is recessed until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

Interjection: It's adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Oh, adjourned; sorry. We're adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1757.

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Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
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MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
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MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
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Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
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Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
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Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	

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Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound-Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East-Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est-Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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of Ontario**

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Mercredi 16 juillet 2014



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 16 July 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 16 juillet 2014

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.
Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2014 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on July 15, 2014, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It is a pleasure for me to stand up to discuss the budget motion and pull back the layers on this budget. I think it's important to acknowledge that all of us in this House want the best for Ontario. We have a shared purpose and a shared responsibility to build up this province. We have very different ideas of how to do that, though. I think that that is very clear when you do a further examination of the budget that was put forward by the Liberal government.

My role as finance critic and as critic for the Treasury Board is unique. I have to tell you I'm already really enjoying it, and it's going to be especially interesting for me to follow the minister of savings, otherwise known as the President of the Treasury Board, to see where this government is looking to find savings and find efficiencies, and, quite honestly, to make sure that those findings don't hurt the people of this province.

I think if you have an open mind, if you look at this budget in its fullness, you will see that it is not the path to actually build up this province. In fact, after year one and after some 70 promises, you will see, as anybody would if they looked on page 244, it clearly indicates that there will be a 6% cut to program spending. This is indeed of great concern to us on this side of the House, especially because the government has not been fully clear on where those cuts will happen, which programs will be cut and who will be most affected.

I also think it's important for us to have an honest conversation about what the purpose of a budget is. There are some people who feel strongly that budgets are actually moral documents: They tell the story of our priorities; they tell the story of our values and of our principles; they indicate, or they should reflect, the priorities of the people we serve. I think that for a lot of people, actually, a lot of citizens, this is the time when they pay the closest attention to government. Sometimes there's a

lot of noise, especially around an election. There was a lot of rhetoric, there was a lot of noise around the election this time, and I think right now they're actually just getting their first look, their first real look, at the facts of this budget. I think they will see that their priorities around job creation, around affordability, around fairness and around justice are not reflected in this budget.

I also think it's really important to acknowledge that fear was a dominant emotion. Actually, I want to commend the interim leader of the PC caucus for being up front and stating what happened and what their role was in the derailment, if you will, of this election. Certainly, as I knocked on the 12,000 doors, I heard very strongly that fear was the dominant emotion, and it's a very powerful emotion. I want to put that on the record.

When you look at this budget, though, you can see that affordability is truly not a priority, that fairness is not a priority. Certainly, once you move past year one—because it's important to acknowledge that there was an extra \$3.4 billion in promises contained within this budget over the 2013 one. We're going to have to see how that plays itself out, because we know there has not been a full costing of those promises.

I do think, though, as I mentioned, the 6% reduction in program spending, as listed on page 244 of this budget, is a huge red flag, and it should have been a red flag during the election. It should have been a red flag for some of our stakeholders and some of our partners, because there is truly a lack of clarity as to which ministries are going to be hit the hardest. Now, to be clear, the government has said that they're not going to go near education or health care, although during the election I heard very loudly at the doorstep, as I know a lot of my colleagues did, that there is duplication in health care—in the LHINs, in the CCACs, in the administrations of the hospitals. When you have duplication, you obviously have a level of inefficiency, and I think that does not serve the people in our health care system the best. We highlighted that, and it has not been reflected in the budget.

The role of the finance critic—I've been talking to a lot of former finance critics and finance ministers and I've been reaching out to sort of find out how this role can be effective in a majority government, because I think it's really important to acknowledge that the terms of engagement, if you will, have changed drastically. I was thinking about this last night, and I strongly believe that minority governments can work for the people of this province; I do. As we negotiated through several budgets over the last two or three years—more like two years—we secured some concessions. But the ironic part about

those concessions or those negotiations, where we tried to bring the priorities of people to the budget discussion, to the table, was that those concessions were not honoured. So it's hard to imagine how the 70 promises that are contained within this budget are actually going to be honoured, when we couldn't hold the Liberal government to account for the three election promises.

Most recently, it was just yesterday that the government had to acknowledge that you are not within even a quick grasp or sight of a 15% reduction in auto insurance. In fact, you're quite far from that goal. Five-day home care, for instance, was something that I felt we all really cared about. Those goals were not kept, for sure.

0910

And of course the famous Financial Accountability Office: It took nine and a half months to start that process. I cannot wait to get that FAO up and running. It did pass in this Legislature by all parties; it had all-party support. You'll remember, Mr. Speaker, that it took three members from every party, and we had to find consensus on who that FAO would be. I look forward to the next phase of finding an FAO, because I think if you look at the business practices that are currently here in the province of Ontario, you will agree—the MaRS building, for example; that's just one of the most recent examples. We could talk for the entire 20 minutes about the poor business decisions of this government. I think there has never been a more important or relevant or needed time for a Financial Accountability Officer to be an official officer of this Legislature to ensure that, in a majority setting, we ensure that the taxpayers and the citizens of this province are best served through those expenditures.

I do want to say, though, this new relationship is—I think there's still potential here; I really do. There are a number of issues that, of course, we are going to push back on, like the full sale of public assets. This is a huge concern for us, and the more we talk about it, actually, in the province of Ontario—it is a shared concern for the people of this province as well.

We also, of course, are very concerned about job creation in the province of Ontario, because this is a revenue stream that we need. People want to get back to work in the province of Ontario. I have to tell you that this budget doesn't have any new ideas around job creation; this is a huge concern. I raised this in question period the other day when the new job numbers came out—which people are discounting on that side of the House, but they seem very real on this side of the House, and I know they seem very real for the people of the province of Ontario.

People want to make sure that they're going to get good value going forward. We do get good value, for instance, from the LCBO. It generates \$1.77 billion for this province, and it's a good public asset. Those are good jobs. I think that any proposal to sell off those assets is a huge concern for us as a party.

We also, obviously, have concerns about how this public pension plan has rolled out in the province of Ontario. You will see that it's not in this budget. You will see that the focus has been, first and foremost, for a

private pension plan. That is the priority. I think that our leader yesterday said it best; she said it's banks before people. If there is a genuine interest in a public pension plan, why not put that first and foremost, if that really was a priority? It was a really good sound bite, I have to admit. It was a good sound bite, and there was lots of spin around it, but if the government plans to move forward with a Harper-style private pension plan this fall—clearly, that is the priority. Actions speak louder than a headline or some spin going forward.

Another reason why we really think that financial accountability is important—and that is the lens that I'm going to be seeing this budget through—is that the government plans to deliver more projects through the alternative financing model, the AFP, or P3s, where we have not seen good value for the people of this province.

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: No; you transfer the risks, but the people of the province still pay the price at the end of the day. So the government was going to continue to deliver more projects through a public-private partnership model. The province is even proceeding with a new courthouse in Milton using the AFP model.

I think there's some responsibility to actually listen to some of the feedback from those financial models that have played themselves out in the province of Ontario. They haven't served the people well, because you haven't put the appropriate accountability measures in place to make sure that people get the true value, and that quality value as well.

On job creation—my former critic portfolio was in economic development—I have to tell you that the Liberal policies, as they stand, of no-strings-attached corporate giveaways have failed to create jobs. We actually know this; we have the numbers to prove it. Last month, of course, the 34,000 people who lost their jobs—and the minister recommended that they take some happy pills and have a more positive outlook, as if that's going to create jobs. It was really a flippant moment—because language can be so important—that was quite disrespectful for the people who find themselves more and more so in a situation of precarious part-time contract work, which is the new reality for the people of this province, especially for the youth in Ontario.

We have one of the highest youth unemployment rates in Canada. It cannot be denied, which is why we brought the youth employment strategy to the last budget to open those doors to incentivize the hiring of youth in the province of Ontario so that they could actually get some experience going forward.

You know that we favour, on this side of the House, targeted tax credits because when you are acknowledging that small and medium-sized businesses are the backbone of our economy—and they are crying out for a partner in the province of Ontario. They are asking for some support. They are facing some of the highest hydro rates, which are driving jobs out of the province of Ontario. We are losing those good jobs that small and medium-sized enterprises actually create on the ground. Those are real

jobs. They are not no-strings-attached corporate giveaways, which hold jobs here that were already going to be held here.

I really strongly believe that the corporate tax giveaways to large businesses actually have proven to not be very effective. I think when the government plays such a strong role in picking and choosing winners—this high-tech company or this research company; they are the favourite for the province of Ontario—I truly believe that that disincentivizes further investment by other companies, and we have some experience with this. Obviously, I think that that's not going to work and I think that we have some fairly good research and evidence to prove that it's not going to work.

I have this little sticky here, from the throne speech, as it relates to this budget motion—in the throne speech it said, we will use “evidence before ideology and choose partnership over partisanship.” Yet, you can see that this is actually already not being played out with some integrity, if you will, as the budget is presented. It's the same budget. It was the same budget we couldn't support back in May. There's still no plan to reduce hydro rates. There are still no new ideas for jobs. There's no end to corporate tax giveaways that reward companies that actually ship jobs overseas; they don't hold them here. That's why we prefer the targeted tax credit, because if you're investing in innovation, investing in research and investing in capital, those jobs are staying here. It's a direct relationship and it's a very accountable relationship that businesses have with their government. It has worked very well in Manitoba. It has worked very well in Quebec.

In the spirit of a new sort of legislative session, I would have thought that there was a possibility that perhaps you would look at other options, because what you are doing is not working, and we need it to work. We need people to get back to work. We need Ontario to be a destination for investment. We need to start creating things and making things. The serious gap between the commercialization of research from our academic institutions into advanced manufacturing—this is a huge window of opportunity for us. We have small examples of where it is working. So why not use those examples, build on that success—those small examples of success—and duplicate it across the province, instead of these innovative incentive clusters that are on the books right now?

I think that there's a lot of hard work in front of us. If this government truly wants to partner in this work, then we have to be really clear. We need to know where the cuts are going to happen; we need to know how those cuts are going to impact the people of this province.

0920

It's encouraging, somewhat, to see the media finally catch on to this. There are some media outlets that have not, but yesterday's *Globe and Mail* editorial cites, “Ontario's Budget: On Second Thought, This Might Hurt.” We know it's going to hurt, because we know there are ministries that are not in the exempt line for the

6% project cuts, which we actually predict are going to be—if you're flatlining program spending, you're actually talking about cutting. When you are flatlining hospital funding, when those hospitals have already identified that they have a proven, evidence-based rationale for increased spending and you just flatline it, that essentially is a cut. It is a cut, and it's hurting those hospitals. It's forcing them to make cuts, I think, that are not in the best interests of patient care.

The most interesting thing about the editorial from the *Globe and Mail* is that they say, “The actual budget, the Liberal government's multi-year spending plan, is an austerity budget.” We have been talking about this for a long time. We did see it for what it was. We called the government on that and we said we could not support it. Of course, there was a lack of confidence on our part to see that budget—we did not want to see that budget come into play. We still don't want to see it come into play, because we don't believe that you're going to follow through on those 70 promises and those 50 new spending priorities, because you haven't identified clear revenue streams, except for the one-time sale of public assets, which you've identified to be around \$3.15 billion. It's one time; it is one time.

I had a financial briefing yesterday—excellent people from multiple ministries. I want to thank the Minister of Finance for helping to set that up for me. When you go through this budget line by line, when you pull back the layers, you see it for what it is. I think it's going to be a wake-up call for many people in this province. I think you're going to see this government start to apologize and backtrack very quickly, because those financial streams, those revenue streams, will not flow. When you see the closure of child care facilities, for instance, even though you cite huge dollars that are going to child care, when on the ground child care centres are closing—we will be bringing those stories to this Legislature. I think that is essentially the job of the finance critic: to follow the money, peel back the layers, ensure that the people of this province see this budget for what it is and ensure that, if there is an opportunity to mitigate that damage, to protect those front-line services, then we play that role—and we have played that role very well for a long time.

I just want to summarize the editorial from the *Globe*. It says, “Over the past few months, the Liberal Party has been a bit like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. One wrote the budget. The other won the election. Which one will govern?” I think we know the answer to that. On this side of the House, we were very clear about where your real priorities are. We're going to hold you to account, because that's what the people of this province told us to do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'm delighted that the member from Kitchener–Waterloo had an opportunity today, and I guess partly yesterday, to do an analysis of the budget and to make her criticisms of it. What astounds me, however, is this is not the criticism of the budget we were

hearing during the course of the campaign, when her party was out there talking about austerity measures, which were completely different and completely off-topic.

I want to remind the members of this House—I mean, the finance critic for the third party came and participated in government hearings across the province. Your party was very active in creating this budget; we saw repeatedly that it's a budget that we thought your party would be absolutely supportive of all the way down the line. For you to come out now and start criticizing the budget that your party helped create I find somewhat surprising.

We talked about the wholesale sale of assets—well, that's just not on the table, and I think the members know that. There are some assets, like General Motors shares. Why does the third party think we need to continue to hold General Motors shares? We should unlock the value of that asset and put it towards more constructive things, like the infrastructure that we want to build—the infrastructure contained in our \$29-billion infrastructure-building project, which will invest in hospitals, bridges, roads and transportation, \$15 billion of which is in the GTA. It strikes me as odd that the member would be so critical.

You also talked about the financing models—the AFP model. In my own neighbourhood, Bridgepoint Health is a fantastic institution—built on time, built on budget—opening up now and serving the members of my community of Beaches-East York, but also Toronto-Danforth, where it's actually situated.

It strikes me as disingenuous that you can now be criticizing the budget that you helped create. This is a budget which is full of good things, like support for personal support workers. I know that in your heart you believe you can support this, and we urge you to support this budget when it finally comes to a vote.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. I'd just remind the member that some of those words are borderline—you know which one; it starts with a D—so be careful in the future.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I apologize.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's my pleasure to stand and reflect on the comments that we heard from the finance critic from the third party. She introduced a whole array of issues that this budget brings to the table, and I'd like to reflect on a couple of things.

In particular, she touched on the redundancy and the layers of spending in the health field. It made me think of a meeting that I had just last week with the Bluewater family health team. They're concerned. They are striving to meet the health needs of their community, and they were really proud to have a nurse practitioner in rural Ontario, in their small community. But what is happening is, on the other side of the health field fence, CCACs throughout my riding—and, I'm sure, across Ontario—are cherry-picking and plucking nurse practitioners out of family health teams with richer benefits and opportunities

on the other side of the proverbial fence, as I mentioned. This is leaving communities in dire straits in terms of health care. That's one issue that we can hopefully continue to address.

A second thing that was brought up during the member's comments is the concern over job loss. Yes, we agree. The month of June was pretty dire in Ontario, with the loss of 34,000 jobs.

I reflect on the comments that she shared with regard to the mandatory Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. For goodness' sake, we're going to lose more jobs. When I was door-knocking and mainstreeting during the recent campaign, small businesses were saying, "We cannot afford any more job taxes." In essence, this mandatory pension plan, where they're going to have to pay over and above what they already do for this pension, is going to cause them to hire fewer people.

This budget is going to be voted against by my party, and I'm proud to do that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments? The member from Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Good morning, Speaker. How are you?

We've been hearing very clearly over the last couple of days, during question period, about how we can't go back to 1996 when it comes to manufacturing jobs—

Interjection: To 1976.

Mr. Wayne Gates: —or 1976. But think about what you're saying there. Every country in the world is investing in manufacturing. Every country in the world wants manufacturing in their country; it doesn't matter which one it is.

If you take a look at the auto sector, which is very important to the overall Canadian economy, particularly in Ontario: In Niagara, where I'm from, General Motors, for the first time in 25 years, hired people at the plant. This summer, they hired students for the first time in 20 years. So, there's an opportunity in manufacturing to not only keep manufacturing in Ontario, but also to grow and to hire our young people.

When you talk about the Liberal colleague who talked about keeping the General Motors shares—why would we sell those shares? I'll be very clear about why you don't sell the shares: Because if you have some shares in the company, you then have some control over keeping them in the province of Ontario. When you get rid of those shares, you have absolutely no say in keeping that. If you talk to the auto sector, they'll tell you the same thing. People who have sat and talked to your people over there—that's absolutely correct.

When you take a look at manufacturing in my area, SpencerARL, which is a new company, a new manufacturer that came into Niagara Falls, the first manufacturer in over 20 years to come into that community, they started with 11 people. They're now up to 300. So there are opportunities for manufacturers. I say to my colleagues on the other side, don't give up on manufacturing.

0930

When you talk about the LCBO—my colleague in front of me here talked about \$1.77 billion in profit. Where does that profit go? It goes into our—

Interjection.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'll finish this up when I do another hit.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. I hope you're doing fine today—as well as the member from Niagara Falls, I know, asked that question.

I had the opportunity to listen to the member from Kitchener's remarks this morning. This is the second or third opportunity I've had over the last couple of days, both on debate of the throne speech and debate of the budget, to listen to members from both opposition parties talk about the lessons they've drawn from the recent consultation that we all had with the people of Ontario. The thing that strikes me—in fact, the thing that astounds me—is the amnesia that seems to have settled in on both opposition benches with respect to the very clear message that we all received from the people of Ontario.

I think, first of all, it was very clear that the people across this province want this Legislature to work together, to work as hard as we can to make crucial investments in areas like transportation and transit to build Ontario up and to move the province forward; to make sure that our economy remains prosperous; to make sure that everyone has a decent opportunity, an equitable opportunity at a better life for themselves, for their children and for their grandchildren. Over the last number of days, I've heard members from both parties on the opposition benches talk about what they claim to have heard or what they say they've heard throughout the consultation with the people, where, apparently, everything that we put forward with respect to building the province up runs contrary to what they heard in their communities.

Most evidence that we see through that exercise in democracy would perhaps suggest that that's not exactly the lesson that should be drawn from that consultation, but I think it is important, as others have said, as the member from Beaches–East York said when he spoke, that we find a way to work together.

Of course, we all agree on the need for a Financial Accountability Officer. That's why I was so proud to work so hard with the member from Kitchener and the former member from Durham on trying to fill that position. It is unfortunate that both opposition parties thought that it was more important to obstruct those efforts instead of moving forward, and we see evidence in the response from the people of Ontario respecting their tactics.

I hope we'll be able to move forward in a more positive way.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Kitchener–Waterloo has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the members from Beaches–East York, Dufferin–Caledon, Niagara Falls and the Minister of Transportation for your feedback on the comments I made around the budget motion.

The member from Beaches–East York: It's interesting, because I did go around the province and listen, through the finance committee, to people and their concerns—the lived experiences of the people in this province. There is a serious disconnect from that lived experience to what's contained in this budget; I can tell you that first-hand.

Just a small example: when the Liberal government went out of the business of doing group homes for those who have adult children with developmental issues. You went out of that business almost five years ago with no foreseeable plan to bridge that transition gap. In the budget, it says another \$810 million, which is an amazing amount of money—don't get me wrong—but the plan around that \$810 million is wrong-headed. The people have already waited five or six years for housing. They're going to wait another four years. This is the time period where those adult parents have to take their adult children and commit them to state-organized institutions.

I really think that it is about priorities. Budgets are about priorities. When we looked at this priority, we did not see the people's needs reflected in it. A budget should reflect the needs of the people of the province that we are serving. It should not serve our own purposes.

When that Financial Accountability Officer is finally brought to this Legislature, because it will happen, I hope that that individual—because it has to be someone who understands not only the public sector, but who can do economic forecasting outside of this place, in the real world, in the private sector. There has to be a balance with that role. I look forward to working towards true financial accountability in this place, because quite honestly, it is desperately needed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my honour to rise on behalf of the people of Chatham–Kent–Essex this morning to debate this budget. I was sent back to Queen's Park for a second time with a simple to-do list, and it was simply to do this: Fight to keep taxes low, balance the books and bring good-paying jobs back to my riding. What this government has tabled is a budget that raises taxes, adds \$12.5 billion in debt and continues the Liberal plan that is now seeing Ontario's unemployment rate stay above the national for 90—that's nine zero—consecutive months now. That goes against every pledge that I made to the people of my riding.

Supporting a budget that builds Ontario up on such shaky ground is something that I just cannot do. Mr. Speaker, we've heard a lot of analysis and commentary on this reshaped budget. It's almost like refried beans. In the House, we've heard that the NDP describe it as a Trojan Horse. By the way, with this government's destroying of the horse racing industry, a Trojan Horse might be the only horse left in Ontario.

Yesterday, the member from Haldimand-Norfolk described Ontario as being on the edge of an economic apocalypse, with the four horsemen being debt, deficit, energy rates and red tape. As scary as that imagery is, the numbers are much worse. Speaker, this budget continues right on the same track that has led Ontario to a provincial debt nearing \$300 billion. This budget has brought about warnings from international credit rating agencies who are greatly concerned about the ability of the province to pay off its debt. But much more importantly than that, this budget does absolutely nothing to help the 34,000 people who lost their jobs in June to get back to work.

You know, Speaker, 34,000 lost jobs is more than the entire population of the town of Leamington in my great riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex. In just one month, that many people went to bed without knowing where they were going to go to work in the morning. Too many people in my riding are all too familiar with that feeling. Towns like Leamington have certainly had their share of job losses.

Thankfully, Leamington is starting to see brighter days ahead. Heinz is gone, and with that, 740 full-time jobs, 300 seasonal jobs, 46 growers. However, on the brighter side, a company called Highbury Canco have come to the rescue—partial rescue—of Leamington. They now will be starting—if they haven't started yet, it will be sometime this month. They will be employing 250 full-time people, with some seasonal and a handful of growers. That's not what it was, but it's better than nothing. It's a start. As I've talked to many people, in the media and people in Leamington, those who are working for Highbury Canco, if they do a good job, eventually, perhaps more lines will go in. Putting in more lines means more employment for people. But right now, Speaker, there still remain 500 people in Leamington who are unemployed. They weren't hired by Highbury Canco at this point in time. But 250 is a good start. It's better than nothing. I think we just need to be grateful for what they have. But, again, the people of Leamington are stronger than whatever challenges this Liberal government can throw their way, as is the rest of the great riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex.

Since this government came into power, embarrassingly and hurtfully I say that my riding has lost over 10,000 manufacturing jobs alone since 2003. What was once a big manufacturing boomtown is now empty buildings and call centres—and nothing against call centres. That's something for the people, but it certainly isn't what it was.

People in my riding have looked to this government to take bold action to bring businesses back by getting taxes and energy rates under control. Instead, this budget hikes taxes and drives energy rates even higher. I can only hope that with all the businesses leaving Ontario, it doesn't amount to, "Last one to leave, please turn off the lights."

Mr. Speaker, one of the focal points of this budget is the Ontario Registered Pension Plan. There have been many critics of this Liberal plan, including small busi-

nesses, who I have talked to, not only struggling with the high energy rates, but they're also struggling with: What does this mean now? Everybody wants to make more money, but do you know what? If you don't have the money coming in, the revenue coming in, you can't have higher-paying jobs, because the bottom line is, businesses are not going to stay in business if that be the case.

0940

These small businesses have gone on record and called this Ontario Registered Pension Plan nothing more than a payroll tax. People will end up with less take-home pay, plus businesses have to chip in and pay as well. I question who that's really going to help in the long run. Small businesses in my riding are opposed to the plan because it will stretch out their already thin margins. There are local job creators of all sizes who tell me constantly that they can't afford to pay skyrocketing energy rates, and that red tape is slowly suffocating their businesses.

Speaker, the Retail Council of Canada has stated that many of its members are very concerned about this Liberal pension plan. They're concerned about being able to recoup the costs of this payroll tax without raising prices on consumers or being forced to lay off staff. To me, that is reverse thinking. You know what? They talk about wanting to create jobs—a valid point. But to cause penalties on the businesses who are then forced to lay people off, to me, is going in the opposite direction.

Ontario businesses, both large and small, have already started to brace for the impact of the Premier's plan. It will result in job losses and higher prices for consumers, who are already having a hard time getting by. Not every business will be forced to pay prices or lay off employees, but many would. This is a huge cause for concern in Chatham-Kent-Essex while our local economy is hurting.

The ORPP, the Ontario Registered Pension Plan, does nothing for seniors; it's not going to help them at all. Perhaps this government should teach students in school the value of a dollar and teach them how to save for their future, and then maybe a lot of people, years down the road, may not find themselves in such a financial crisis as they are right now.

Many constituents are having difficulty making ends meet. They were just hit with a municipal tax. The cost of keeping their houses cool this summer keeps rising. They can't afford a policy that will make many of the products and services that they rely on more expensive.

People in my riding do not want to see a single job leave their communities. They've been through enough devastation. This proposal will push more jobs out of our economy—and again, we're moving in the wrong direction. The cost of doing business here in the province of Ontario is far too high. Keeping jobs in my riding is the number one concern, and I cannot support a plan that would cause a reduction of jobs.

The Premier boasted the other day about going on a trip to China, presumably to talk with many of the businesses that have left the province under her party's reign. Instead, I would suggest that she take a trip to the great riding of—yes—Chatham-Kent-Essex, and try to con-

vince companies in my riding to stay in the province. Not only would that save several thousands of taxpayers' dollars, but here's an advantage and here's a plus to her coming down to Chatham—Kent—Essex: Not only will she have a chance to talk to the businesses, but she'll also have a chance to drive and see the massive wind turbines right beside the 401.

I'm pleased that this budget doesn't raise taxes for all Ontarians, but I am disappointed that there are several tax hikes spread throughout the document. For many Ontarians whose children have moved west to find work, thanks to this budget it's about to get even more expensive to go visit their kids. Let me explain. The budget will increase the tax on aviation fuel by nearly 150%, which then means that fares to go visit your children who have moved out west become even more expensive. The government's plan to stop the flight of our labour force to western Canada is to make it too expensive to fly there.

Yesterday, the member from Elgin—Middlesex—London pointed out that for the first time in Ontario's history, seniors are going to be forced to pay for a fishing licence. Come on, seriously? Certain members will have to pay to go fishing now, Mr. Speaker.

We've also noticed that many hospitals around the province are being forced to increase parking fees to raise more funds since the health care in Ontario is not getting money down to the front lines. These people are there to visit loved ones facing health challenges, and this government is reaching into their pockets. That's absolutely shameful.

That's the only plan that this government has when it comes to balancing the books: gouge the public wherever they can with fees, such as taxes, revenue tools, probably to cover up their "Oops" here and there, and of course, hopefully nobody notices—at least that's what they hope.

Despite the fact that Ontario's deficit will be larger than the combined deficits of the federal and all provincial governments, this Liberal government somehow claims to be the leanest in the country. Well, with job losses, unfortunately, perhaps Ontarians may become leaner because they can't afford to live here any longer. Peter Epp, a journalist who is featured in papers throughout southwestern Ontario, hit the nail on the head with his column titled, "Low Spending or Not, Ontario Still Has a Deficit":

"Advocates for Monday's Ontario budget and for the government of Premier Kathleen Wynne have repeatedly stated that this province spends the least, on a per capita basis, of any other province in Canada.

"The statement is used mostly in response to criticism of the government's spending, of its structural deficit, and of its debt.

"The argument follows that government spending in Ontario is efficient, the most efficient in Canada, and that there is no possible room for more efficiency.

"The point is acknowledged, but it fails to reach its intended target on several fronts.

"If Ontario's spending [is] so well controlled and so efficient, why are we facing a \$12.5-billion deficit for

2014-15, and why did we just absorb another \$10-billion-plus deficit for 2013-14?

He goes on to say:

"It's one thing to talk about per capita spending, but it's another to talk about per capita revenue collecting.

"The fact the two sides aren't matching is part of the reason for Ontario's structural deficit."

This government will continue repeating that Ontario is the province with the lowest spending per capita, but you will never hear them acknowledge that Ontario has the second-highest debt per capita in the entire country. The debt load on every man, woman and child in the province is over \$20,000. That number is constantly increasing under this Liberal government.

Speaker, I will not stand for this government passing this ticking time bomb along to future generations, future generations including my children, my grandchildren and perhaps even my great-grandchildren—and yours, too, by the way. Governments will come and go, but our province's debt will remain.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Speaker, how are you?

I'll continue on where I was. When it comes to the LCBO: \$1.77 billion in profit, and that money goes to help health care and education. We're now talking about maybe selling it off—or maybe not selling it off, but they certainly are talking about contracting out some of the functions. What contracting out means is job loss. In a province that has a crisis in employment, we're looking at job loss for those workers, who, quite frankly, over a number of years, have helped create the success of the LCBO, have helped create the profits of the LCBO. Certainly, it's something that I would not be in favour of, contracting out workers and having them lose their jobs under the LCBO.

The other thing that I took a look at in the comments that were made—we talked about having the best health care and the best education in the world. Yet, when I take a look at the schools in rural Ontario, in small towns, like Parliament Oak school in the old town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, why are we not looking at, instead of closing schools, trying to find ways to keep schools open in the old towns, and have partnerships, not with other boards, but have partnerships within the community with not-for-profits—a plan to make the heartbeat of your community be the school.

0950

I can remember—I know a lot of people here might remember when they were young—I used to go after school to play basketball. I know people are saying, "Well, you're not very tall." But I did play basketball there. I played ball hockey. The school was where I went. I went during the day, I ran home and had my peanut butter and jam sandwich, and then I went back to the school.

So why do we not keep the schools open and make them the heart? We can do that by partnering with groups like not-for-profits in the old town. When we take a look at the old—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I know. Sorry about that.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Does he have to withdraw the peanut butter?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): No, he doesn't have to withdraw the peanut butter. I like it.

The member from Cambridge.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I listened intently to the comments from the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex, as well as the member from Niagara Falls, as well as the rest of the debate that has happened this morning in this place.

I'm very supportive of this budget that went forward.

In Cambridge, it has been 71 years since a Liberal member was elected. It switched from Conservative to NDP, back to Conservative, back to NDP and back to Conservative.

The reason that I was elected by the constituents of Cambridge was really because I'm a health care representative with over 30 years of health care experience. It made sense to the community of Cambridge to elect a member with this long experience to help this place and the government make decisions on smart, strategic investments in health care, such as home care, bringing in better service provision at a lower cost, to make sure that we have the right care, at the right place, at the right time. I certainly stand behind our government's commitment in this budget to continue its smart investment in home care.

I've heard discussion this morning about the CCACs, the LHINs, the difference in costs and some of the administration costs being the same. In fact, these two agencies operate quite independently of each other. As we know, the community care access centres provide services for folks at home and ensure that people in their homes have better health care at a lower cost, preventing them from getting into hospital.

I'm very supportive of this budget going forward. I know that the constituents in Cambridge elected me to ensure that this budget passes as is.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to stand and reflect on the very relevant comments that we received from the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex.

First of all, I thought it was very astute of him to offer the Premier an opportunity to tour his riding, because I think it would behoove the entire Liberal government to go north of 7 and to get hit with realities. Time and again, I'm hearing from specific members implications or references that what we're saying as being relevant in our ridings maybe are true or maybe not, and I find that absolutely—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Stop the clock. We've got a little trouble over here on the right side. I've got nine sidebars going on at once. If you want to have your little discussions, please go outside. I can't hear the person speaking. Thank you.

Continue.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I'll repeat what I was saying. The fact is, I encourage this Liberal government to travel north of Highway 7 to get a real dose of reality, because I am very, very frustrated that we have arrogant members across the House who are implying that what is very real in our riding may be or may not be true. I think that's absolutely disgraceful and an injustice.

We should be treating all of Ontario as equals. We cannot move forward economically if we don't have a prosperous urban and a prosperous rural sector, and this government would be wise to pay heed to that, because we are losing jobs throughout Ontario. The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex talked about losing 10,000 jobs in his riding. My riding of Huron–Bruce is recognizing that as well.

When we meet with people, we hear about electricity rates over and over again, yet this budget that this Liberal government is so proud of—so proud of that they reintroduced the very same thing over again, so we've had to look at it twice—does nothing to help with the cost of electricity rates going through the roof. Manufacturers and homeowners deserve better. This government had better wise up.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I'd just like to build on what the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex was speaking about in our area—and I consider it a shared area, Windsor and Essex county: the closure of Heinz. I attended a vigil there. The closure of Heinz affected many in my riding, not just in the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex's riding.

We have people leaving Windsor in record numbers because there aren't good, secure jobs in our area. We have to look at the horse racing industry in my area. They decimated that industry. We've lost many key services in our area because of that industry being shut down.

We also have to look at health care in Windsor. We face incredibly long ER wait times. We have key services closed down on the weekends. Our cardiac care centre is closed down. If, heaven forbid, you have a cardiac emergency, you are shipped across the border for treatment or to London. That's not acceptable in my area. This budget does not address those concerns in my area.

We also have to look at the services that they have threatened, and continue to threaten, to take away from us. In my area, there was a big concern about losing thoracic cancer surgeries and those being shipped to London. It was the community that rallied together in order to save those key services. Our community shouldn't have to fight to keep those life-saving treatments in our area.

I can't speak for all of Ontario, but in Windsor West, what my constituents were saying is that they do not support this budget. There are just not enough measures in it for the people in my riding.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex has two minutes.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I'd like to thank the members from Niagara Falls, Windsor West, also the member from Cambridge—thank you—and, of course, from Huron—Bruce for their comments. I do appreciate and value their input. Unfortunately, I don't agree with all the comments that were made, but that's—welcome to this place.

We've often heard, Speaker, the old saying, "Go west, young man," or now I guess they have to say, "Go west, young man; go west, young lady." West, for me, is anything west of Yonge Street. Go west. Come down to my area: Chatham—Kent—Essex. See the turbines. Visit the empty buildings. That will be an eye-opener. That will be a shocker. We have over 500 industrial wind turbines. What are they doing down there other than being a distraction, devaluing property, increasing energy rates and creating health hazards, not only for people but also for animals and for birds and bats? It's a mess down there.

The other concern that I have is the number of jobs that are leaving Chatham—Kent—Essex and the potential businesses that have already talked to me, saying, "Rick, if things don't change with global adjustment, if we can't get the energy rates under control, we're going to have to turn out the lights, literally—lock the doors and leave." I had one company say that the global adjustment is so high; it's killing business so much. Some 55 jobs in my riding are sitting in limbo right now.

The other concern I have, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that our credit rating outlook doesn't look very good at all. It has been lowered to negative, and my biggest concern is the fact that there could be a credit rating downgrade, which would, in fact—interest rates are at an all-time low, and a 1% increase in interest rates will drive up interest on our debt and deficit by over \$500 million.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? Second call: Further debate? Last and final call: Further debate?

Hearing none, Mr. Sousa has moved, seconded by Ms. Wynne, that the House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a "no."

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Because it's the morning session, seeing five members standing, this vote will be deferred until after question period.

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Orders of the day? Government House leader?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I ask to adjourn the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The government leader has moved to adjourn the House. Is it the pleasure of the—

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Recess, I mean, Speaker. Recess until question period.

Interjections.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Adjourn the House. We're done.

Interjections.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: No further business.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Okay. Seeing no further business, this House stands adjourned until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1000 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It's my pleasure to introduce Evelyn Locke, who has joined us. She is the daughter of our chief of staff, Pina Martino.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I would like to introduce Denis Poulin and Karen Somerville, who are here from my neighbourhood. Welcome, and I hope you enjoy the proceedings.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Good morning. I would like to welcome Katherine Bowes, who is the mother of Ashley Bowes, our page from Oshawa. She'll be in the public gallery this morning.

I would also like to introduce Donna Lajeunesse, who is a friend of mine visiting from Oshawa.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I would like to recognize our page captain today Stephanie Ttofias. Visiting her today are her parents, George and Angela; as well as her brother Constantine, who is a former page, I understand; and grandmother, Helen Ttofias. If you could stand and be recognized.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the mayor of Clarington, Mr. Adrian Foster; and Mr. Justin MacLean from my constituency office.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Good morning. It's my pleasure to introduce Doris Ward in the gallery today. She has been a long-time resident of the riding, and not to be too biased, she has been supporting Liberal MPPs going back to 1958, when the member was Frank Drea. We finally won this seat in 2003, and she keeps reminding me I'm the first Liberal to represent that riding. She's still working on campaigns in the future, already planning.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm glad to introduce page captain Émilie Lebel, from Timmins—James Bay, and her aunt Debbie Dumaesq, who is here at Queen's Park today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Premier. Premier, your finance minister says he wants to "optimize and maximize" public assets. But we both know that what he really means is creating Warren Buffett-style efficiencies.

That means streamlining, it means cost-cutting, and it means job losses. It means jobs are about to disappear at the Liquor Control Board of Ontario, Ontario Power Authority and Ontario Power Generation. Even Smokey

Thomas, president of OPSEU, recognized that you can't eliminate the deficit in three years without cutting services for the people of Ontario when he said, "With what they're promising to spend and how they're promising to control costs, the public service can only shrink."

My question, Premier, is quite simple: How many liquor store employees, LCBO employees, Hydro One employees and OPG employees are about to lose their jobs?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, it's an interesting situation when the party that ran on immediately cutting 100,000 jobs in Ontario is questioning us about that issue.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say the reason we have asked Ed Clark and his team to look at the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario is that we want to make sure they work to the optimal value, the optimal benefit for the people of Ontario.

I have said a number of times that had we had such a process in place, had the government of the day had such a process in place when they were looking at the 407, I believe there would not have been such a bad deal for the people of Ontario, because there are billions and billions of dollars of revenue that are lost to the people of Ontario in what was a public asset because of the arrangement. We're not going to do that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Again to the Premier: Here's a chance to display some of that transparency and accountability you always talk about. Here's a chance to tell the lenders and credit rating agencies exactly what you mean by "optimize" and "maximize." Here's a chance to tell employees at the LCBO, OPG and OPA just how many of their jobs are on the line.

Premier, why don't you just be honest? Can you tell the people of Ontario how many jobs you intend to maximize out the door?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We have been very honest, and we are honestly concerned that the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario—that they be optimized, Mr. Speaker, and that those revenues and those assets work for the people of Ontario so we can reinvest in the infrastructure that is needed.

For example, selling the LCBO headquarters, selling that real estate, selling the GM shares to make sure that we have that money to put into a fund in order to build public transit: That's responsible management of the assets of this province. To reinvest those dollars in infrastructure that is needed in 2014 is exactly what is at the core of our investment strategy around infrastructure.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I'll try again, Mr. Speaker. Premier, you and your finance minister can speak in code all you want. You can talk about optimizing and maximizing, but we all know that you mean job losses. You're simply not being honest with the people of Ontario.

If you are going to meet these deficit reduction targets you always talk about, there comes a point where the

rubber meets the road, so I'll ask you again, in this chamber, in front of your peers and for the benefit of viewers at home: How many people will be out of work by the time you finish selling off Ontario's assets?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The reality is that the people of Ontario rejected the proposal that was put forward by the member opposite and his team to cut and slash across government, to cut public services. What the member opposite didn't talk about were the services that would have been cut as a result of the extreme and reckless plan they were putting forward. That plan was rejected, Mr. Speaker. Our plan is to invest in the people of this province, to invest in their talent and their skills.

I was just at a forum this morning with a visiting delegation from China. I was talking to a business owner who was setting up a research and development capacity here in Ontario. The reason for that is the talent and the skills of our people; he said that explicitly. Because of our educated workforce, they are locating here in Ontario.

That's the kind of investment we—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday you told the CBC that you would be "adding more [GO] trains immediately to the Kitchener-Waterloo line." That statement is a big departure from your GO announcement earlier this year, when you said that it would take until 2016 for you to deliver the trains you actually cut four years ago as transportation minister.

Premier, a simple question: Did you misspeak yesterday? Or have you learned from the error of your ways and now realize your decision to slash GO train expansion to KW should be corrected as soon as possible?

1040

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member from Kitchener for his question. This is the second opportunity that I've had, since becoming the Minister of Transportation, to stand in my place here in the House and respond to a question from that member regarding the crucial investments that we are making in his community and communities right across Ontario.

I'll repeat today what I said on the occasion of responding to that first question, which is: This is one of the reasons that it's extremely important for members of that caucus and that particular member to support the budget that we've reintroduced in this Legislature. We are proposing, we are planning and we are committed to investing \$29 billion in crucial public transit infrastructure, which will serve communities like Kitchener-Waterloo, and I know that that member will want to work with us, in particular our members from his region like the member from Kitchener Centre, to make sure that we implement a plan that makes sense for everybody living in his community and right across Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: I know that the new minister is keen, but these were the comments that were actually made by the Premier. So, Premier, I'll ask you again. I know you've got a majority. You can ignore me, but not the constituents that I represent.

Premier, you doubled down yesterday on your commitment to build high-speed rail from London to Toronto, claiming you could deliver within a decade. Yet you continue to say you need until 2016 to add two GO trains to the Kitchener line that you actually cut as transportation minister. Premier, do you really expect Ontarians to believe that you can deliver high-speed rail in a decade when you say you need six years to add just two more GO trains to the Kitchener line?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'm not quite sure how much clearer we can make this on this side of the House for the member opposite. Both with respect to the question around high-speed rail service and regarding the question of increasing GO service to his community, I just want to reiterate and try to make this as clear as I possibly can: Our government is committed to bringing full-day, two-way GO train service between the Waterloo region and the GTA. As we've said, this is a plan that's going to take place over the next number of years. The \$29 billion that are included in our budget for these kinds of investments will help make sure that we can make this commitment become reality, and we are determined to make that the case.

I should mention, as we've said in the past, that by the end of 2016 Metrolinx will be adding four additional trains—two in the morning and two in the afternoon—to serve the Kitchener station.

It's also important to note that since 2003, Ontario has invested \$19.3 billion in public transit, specifically including \$9.1 billion for GO service. I again call on that member to support our budget to help his community—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Michael Harris: Again, you just heard the minister say "2016," but the Premier said yesterday that she'd add those immediately. Clearly, my constituents, and constituents across southwestern Ontario, actually deserve an answer on this.

Premier, yesterday you told the CBC in Kitchener-Waterloo that your transportation minister would release a third party report that you say backs up your claims about high-speed rail from London to Toronto. But just last week when I actually asked the minister in question period if he'd release the report, he refused.

Ontarians are finding it hard to believe that you have any evidence to support your high-speed rail project, especially when experts across the province have rejected the proposal, calling it a fantasy. Premier, if you really don't have anything to hide, why don't you just order your transportation minister to release that report today?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member opposite for that question again. In the interest of trying to provide clarity to that particular member, I am happy to work with him to provide him with a bit of a briefing on this issue outside of this Legislature. What I would say, though, is that it is important to recognize, as I said in the answer to the second question, that we have made significant investments in crucial public transit infrastructure over the last 11 years.

In fact, between 1999 and 2003, the PCs contributed nothing to GO Transit, leaving it to municipalities to carry the weight and the responsibility. I think what was abundantly clear in the course of this last election campaign was that the people of the Kitchener-Waterloo region, along with people right across this province of Ontario, understood the importance of the comprehensive and thoughtful plan that we are working to implement: \$29 billion over the next 10 years, \$14 billion for communities outside the GTHA, \$15 billion for communities inside the GTHA. Get on board with our plan now.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Does the Premier think it was a mistake for the Harris Conservatives to sell off the 407?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Yes, I do—the way it was done. The fact that there has been no long-term benefit to the people of Ontario from that decision that the previous government made was a mistake.

I have used the 407 and the lack of good process around that as an example of exactly why there needs to be a different process. That's exactly why we have asked Ed Clark and his team to look at the assets owned by the people of Ontario: to optimize them and to make sure that there is ongoing benefit for the people of Ontario and the ability to reinvest in new infrastructure, which is needed now in 2014.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, I didn't get a clear answer to my question. Does the Premier think selling off valuable assets like the 407—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Order.

Please finish.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Does the Premier think selling off valuable assets like the 407, like OPG or like the LCBO is a good idea?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think I know where the member is going on this, Mr. Speaker. I think the leader of the third party is trying to suggest that that's the agenda that we're sneaking into the Legislature and into government.

It was a mistake to deal with the 407 in the way the Conservatives did. That is my opinion. I believe there could have been much better long-term benefit to the people of Ontario.

It is also a mistake for a government never to review assets, never to look at whether they are producing the maximum benefit for the people of Ontario. We're not going to make that mistake; we're not going to make either of those mistakes. We're going to have a process that is responsible, that is prudent, that looks at those assets and makes sure that they are performing for the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, nobody thinks the Liberals are sneaking anything anywhere. Her plan is based on \$3.15 billion coming in the door from the sale of assets. It is clear as a bell in their budget. We know that, in the long term, these kinds of activities, these kinds of sell-offs, are a bad thing for the people of Ontario. It sets our province back. It cuts out sources of revenues. It leads to higher costs for the people of this province. So why does the Premier think that asset sales are okay as long as they do it the Liberal way?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What I think is not just okay but responsible is that government look at the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario and that we make sure that, in 2014, those assets are working in the best way possible so that the investments that are needed now can be made.

It's not our whole plan, but part of our plan is to ask Ed Clark and his team, who have expertise, to look at those assets and make sure they are working to the best advantage for the people of Ontario. That's responsible. That's what we're doing. That's not what the previous government did with the 407.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier. Does the Premier think that Ontarians voted for austerity and cuts?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What we know the people of Ontario did not vote for was a disparate, disconnected list of ideas that were basically based on our fiscal plan, didn't hang together and had no coherence. So they didn't vote for that. They did not vote for the leader of the third—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The plan that we put forward was a plan that would build the province up. It's a plan that was rooted in the budget that we introduced at the beginning of May, which would invest in the people of this province, in their talent and their skills; which is drawing investment from around the world; which would invest in the infrastructure that's needed, whether it's the roads and bridges in northern and rural Ontario or the transit in our urban centres; and which would set up an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan so that people would have retirement security. That's what the plan is that we put forward. That's the plan we are eager to implement.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, does the Premier think that Ontarians voted for the cost of everyday life to go up for them and their families?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, what we know is that if we do not have an economy that is thriving, then it will be very, very difficult for people to find jobs. It will be difficult for our children and our grandchildren to have retirement security. It will be extremely difficult to draw businesses to the province. So what we need to do is make sure that we make the right investments now; that we have the constraints in place so that we can eliminate the deficit by 2017-18. Making the investments in the province and making sure we don't leave the most vulnerable behind—all of that is part of our plan. That's the plan we ran on, that's the plan that we are eager to invest in, and that's the plan that the people of Ontario voted for.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the Liberals insist that their budget is progressive, but this is what people see: They see that yesterday the finance minister gave auto insurance companies another boost, while drivers continue to not see any savings. They see the Liberal plan will send hydro rates up by 42%, another skyrocketing increase over the next number of years. There is a chorus of growing acknowledgement that the job cuts that are hidden in this Trojan Horse budget will be significant. They see a Premier who can't explain why she's moving forward with asset sales when she used to oppose them.

People have some pretty simple questions about this Trojan Horse budget, and my question to the Premier is: Why will she not come clean with the people of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, there was a lot in that question. I'm just going to focus on the auto insurance.

The NDP heard this throughout the candidate—the leader of the third party's candidate for Halton tweeted, "Just got my latest car [insurance] payment update [and] I'm paying \$22 less a month!" That's \$260 less a year.

There has been, on average, more than a 5% reduction in auto insurance.

I think that the leader of the third party knows that what people see in our budget, many of them across the floor—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Hamilton Mountain, come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —they see \$2.5 million in a Jobs and Prosperity Fund; they see \$130 billion in public infrastructure investments, \$11.4 billion in hospital expansions, a made-in-Ontario retirement pension plan, an increase in the Ontario Child Benefit, an increase in social assistance benefits and \$810 million for people with developmental disabilities. That's all part of our plan.

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): New question. The member from Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you very much, Speaker. Good morning. My question, through you, is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Minister, it has been seven years since Ashley Smith suffered her terrible death, and seven months since a coroner's jury made recommendations so that this type of tragedy wouldn't be repeated.

On May 1, the federal government partnered with the Royal Ottawa Health Care Group to fund a two-bed pilot project for mentally ill female offenders at the Brockville secure treatment unit in my riding. The partnership between the federal government and the hospital is because of this treatment model's outstanding results with mentally ill male offenders.

Minister, you know there are far too many women like Ashley suffering in our Ontario jails. My question is, do you think you should deny them access to a program male offenders have been able to access since 2003 because of their gender?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I thank the member opposite for asking a very important question. I know it's an issue that the member has spoken about in the past and has advocated for, and I know my predecessor, the Attorney General, has worked with the member opposite on this issue as well—and so do I. I continue to look into this matter. I've had the opportunity to speak with the CEO of the Royal Ottawa Hospital, which happens to be located in my community of Ottawa Centre. Most recently, I had a brief conversation with the member opposite, and I look forward to continue working with him on this very important issue so that we are providing appropriate mental health treatment for all inmates within our detention system.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Steve Clark: Yes, you're right, Minister. I have spoken to you and your predecessor about this.

In May, a spokesperson told Global News that your ministry "would be willing to review any proposal put forward by the federal government." Well, your government has given me the same answer since 2010 and the federal government has stepped up, Minister. You're wrong. The Attorney General is wrong. It's time to drop the excuse that you can do nothing now that the feds are moving forward.

The good news is, you've got a great opportunity now to do the right thing. You know, Minister, the good work that the Royal Ottawa Health Care Group does with mentally ill patients. You know the good work that they do.

So I'm asking you, will you commit today to bring the province to the table and finally move forward with a plan to treat mentally ill women offenders? They shouldn't be in jail; they should be getting treatment. Minister, when will you come to the table?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Again, I thank the member opposite for his question, and I will restate that this is a very important issue. We need to make sure, Speaker, that we are treating all our inmates with fairness, with respect. They deserve the same access to supports as those in the community. I will continue, as the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, to work along with all members of this House to ensure that those types of services are presented for inmates in our custody.

Ontario now has 10 correctional facilities with mental health nurses on-site providing specialized services to inmates, and we are launching the forensic early intervention service at the Toronto South Detention Centre. It's the first strategy of its kind in Canada. There's a lot of work that is ongoing right now in our correctional facilities to ensure that inmates with mental health challenges are given proper treatment. I look forward to working with the member opposite to make sure that female inmates have fair and equal treatment available to them as well.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Four years ago, the Liberal government put \$2 billion into the pockets of the insurance industry. They slashed our benefits and it resulted in a cost saving to the insurance industry of \$2 billion annually, yet drivers in Ontario are still paying the highest auto insurance in the entire country.

While they move so quickly to slash the benefits for drivers and they move so quickly to increase the profit to the insurance industry, why is it that the new plan announced yesterday by the Minister of Finance seeks again to put more money into the pockets of the insurance industry but drivers are still waiting to see any reduction in their insurance rates?

Hon. Charles Sousa: That's an interesting question from a member across the way who says he's advocating for lower rates, and yet, when we tried putting forward legislation last February, he found ways to stall it, delay it and force us to have to now reintroduce it after a forced election. Had it been done initially, it would have resulted in lower rates today.

We have been fighting for lowering insurance rates since 2003. We've taken measures in 2010 to provide for the anti-fraud task force. We've been going forward in 2011. We've had private members from our side of the House who have been advocating for the same, and we will continue to do that, obviously without their support because they voted against the very measures that would have reduced insurance rates by this point in time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, the measures that the Minister of Finance is speaking about have no guarantee whatsoever of reducing insurance rates for drivers,

but certainly will increase the profits for the insurance industry.

Now, when asked yesterday point blank, “Will this minister and will this government be able to reach their 8% target reduction by August?” the silence was deafening in the response by the Minister of Finance. Instead of guaranteeing that, yes, there will be reductions, the Minister of Finance said, “Shop around,” and maybe you can find them.

The budget is silent on any new measures to guarantee a reduction for drivers in Ontario. I have a very simple question for the Minister of Finance. It’s very clear that the Minister of Finance is not going to reach the August 8% reduction deadline. Will the minister commit to guaranteeing a reduction for drivers instead of continually putting more and more money in the pockets of the insurance industry?

1100

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, because of the measures that we’ve taken—because we have added more teeth to FSCO; because we’re adding dispute resolution system acceleration; because we’re looking after the towing industry; because we’re working with adjusters and appraisers to ensure that there’s a proper dispute mechanism and appeals process to provide for charges against those who may violate; because we’re attacking fraud, because we’re looking after the clinics that are doing it; because we’re reaching and doing everything we can to reduce the claim costs, which result in higher premiums, we have made measures to reduce premiums as well.

We have well over 14 insurance companies who have publicly filed a reduction in their rates by more than 10%, some as high as 14% and 15% already. We have publicized this. We have put them on the webpages. His own colleagues: They themselves have said that they’ve already received lower rates because they’ve taken the measures and because they made those calls.

We will act, obviously without their support because they voted against—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mrs. Laura Albanese: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Safe and affordable housing is an issue that affects all Ontarians, whether they live in my riding of York South–Weston, in Windsor or in Thunder Bay.

During the recent election, the need for our government to continue investing in affordable and social housing was an issue that was frequently brought to my attention. Last week, in the throne speech, our government committed to building a fairer and healthier province, and that means greater access to affordable housing.

The question I’m now being asked is how we are going to tackle this pressing need. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Could he please explain what our

government is doing and will do to ensure that we continue to invest in the vulnerable Ontarians who need greater access to safe and affordable housing?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I want to thank the member from York South–Weston for her ongoing advocacy in this area.

We understand that long-term local solutions are really the only way to address the ongoing need to house vulnerable folk. That’s why our government is focusing on Ontario’s Housing First strategy. We’ve invested over \$3 billion in affordable housing—more than any government before us.

In our throne speech, Mr. Speaker, our government committed to expanding the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative and investment in affordable housing programs. But it’s not an issue just for the province or municipalities. To be brutally frank, we need an ongoing federal partner that we can count on for a housing strategy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you to the minister for confirming our government’s commitment to social and affordable housing.

As you may know, the first co-operative housing building in the city of Toronto was built in my riding of York South–Weston, a residence called Beech Hall. However, Beech Hall is experiencing a crisis that it hasn’t seen the likes of since the 1970s, when the Toronto borough of York threatened to phase out this complex in favour of a new development.

The federal government till now has provided assistance to co-ops and housing providers through programs started in the 1970s and the 1980s. However, these agreements are expiring, and the date is quickly approaching where most of these contracts will be phased out.

Many residents of Beech Hall are calling on the federal government to maintain the existing housing stock. They believe that the federal government needs to come back to the table with long-term, stable sources of funding. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Could he please explain what our government will do to ensure that the federal government maintains its funding?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Our government certainly welcomed the March 2013 announcement by the federal government to renew the joint housing program for the next five years. That said, they also indicated that they’re about to get out of maintaining existing social housing stock, which causes us some real concern.

It remains a fact that the federal government’s contribution is going to be reducing, and reducing quickly, over the next 15 or 20 years. If we’re going to get on with the social and co-operative housing opportunities that are presented, which many stakeholders in Ontario have been able to avail themselves of, we are going to have to work together—the federal government, the provincial government and the municipal government. I hope the opposition and the third party will join us in our efforts and particularly with respect to putting pressure on the federal government.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms. Christine Elliott: My question is to the Premier. Elizabeth Mikelsons is a 24-year-old woman who is living with a very rare disease called spinocerebellar ataxia. This is a painful and disabling neurodegenerative disease which is ultimately terminal.

Elizabeth's needs have recently become so significant that her family is not able to care for her anymore at home, given that she requires 24/7 assistance. Her family has finally found a place where she can live out her days in comfort and dignity. Although it's very difficult to find a place that can accommodate her needs, her family has found such a place. It's Sunbeam Lodge in Kitchener.

Yet, the Ministry of Community and Social Services refuses to fund the \$40,500 it will cost to keep her there for six months, which is just a little over \$200 a day, which will keep Elizabeth there for what might well be her last six months. Recently, her family was forced to resort to the Internet to essentially crowdfund the money that she needs.

Premier, on behalf of Elizabeth and her family, will you commit to funding her stay at Sunbeam Lodge so that she can live out her days in comfort and dignity?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Thank you to the member for Whitty-Oshawa for this question. Of course we cannot discuss any particular individual case because of issues of confidentiality. But as a government I know that we remain totally committed to supporting those with developmental disabilities and we are providing additional services.

We do take this issue incredibly seriously. I know the member opposite, from having worked with her previously on the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, is totally committed to issues around the vulnerable. I would just say to her that we also share that kind of commitment to what we are doing in the developmental disability community. We do believe very strongly that the families and the individuals need the type of support that perhaps we have heard about in this particular case and we're committed to that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Christine Elliott: Well, I'd say to the minister this is a situation that really requires immediate attention. The answer that the family got back through your ministry is that the developmental services office is going to offer them some kind of respite or some kind of Passport funding, which we all know there isn't any money for. This young person needs a place within the last six months. She has a—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Thank you.

Please finish.

Ms. Christine Elliott: We have no idea what the money that has been allocated in the budget is going to

be used for. You have not been forthcoming on that. But this is a very specific case where this young woman needs your attention, and all we get is a process answer. Well, you can't hide behind process on this. We all know that there is a way to do this if there is a will to do this.

Minister, will you please summon the will and find a way to fund this young woman's stay at Sunbeam Lodge for what might be her last six months? Will you please do that?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Perhaps maybe we need an explanation of what exactly is in our budget for those with developmental disabilities. First of all, I think the member does know that Developmental Services Ontario offices work together with families to explore all possible solutions in the community. So in our upcoming budget we're proud to be proposing an investment of \$810 million over the next three years to significantly strengthen developmental services for people in Ontario. This is the single largest infusion of support to the sector in this province in history. And this proposed—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Please finish.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: This proposed additional funding would increase our government's investment in developmental services to more than \$2 billion in 2016-17. This means there will be support for an additional 1,400 people with urgent residential needs. It will eliminate wait-lists for 8,000 children—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

1110

PENSION PLANS

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is for the Associate Minister of Finance. Pooled retirement pension plans are Stephen-Harper-approved plans that are good for banks. They are, however, a gamble for families.

The Liberals insist that their plan is progressive, but it is a plan that's great for Bay Street but leaves Main Street falling behind.

Jim Leech is the head of the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan. He knows a thing or two about pensions. This is what Jim Leech had to say about the promise of these private pensions: "If markets have been bad, your retirement lifestyle will be" far less.

My question: Why is the Premier gambling on a Stephen-Harper-approved private pension scheme?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I want to thank the member opposite for her question and congratulate her on her appointment as critic for pensions.

We know that this is a very important issue in Ontario, because our population is aging, and we have to prepare for the future. That is why, Speaker, we have proposed the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, which is an oppor-

tunity for us to put away a little bit today for the retirement that is coming tomorrow.

Our Ontario Retirement Pension Plan is going to be providing pensions for those in the middle class who currently are without a workplace pension. It will be comparable to and, in fact, will work very well with voluntary plans like the PRPP, RRSPs and other means.

But what is important is that we plan now for what is inevitable in the future, which is an aging population. We know that we are not adequately covering three million people without a workplace-based pension.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I am now moving to individual warnings. When I get quiet and somebody uses that opportunity to say something, I will get you.

Supplementary?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Like the budget, this pension plan is a Trojan Horse plan. The Premier's rhetoric is all about a new public pension plan, but when you look inside, you find Stephen Harper's private pensions. Stephen Harper likes this plan because it helps out banks, and the bank fees on these PRPPs can take a third out of your retirement savings. It's just another way that Bay Street benefits and Main Street falls behind.

Again, why is the Premier's pension plan putting banks ahead of people?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: The fact of the matter is that we actually took our plans to voters in Ontario, and they have overwhelmingly confirmed that we have ensured that we're taking care of people's retirement futures. This is about building Ontario up.

You talk about what economists are saying. In fact, when we plan for the future and give people a predictable stream of income in their retirement years, this is good for our economy. It sustains our economies in cities and towns across this province.

We are doing the smart thing by introducing the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan while ensuring that voluntary options are still available to people so that they can meet their retirement goals. That is the responsible and smart thing to do in terms of securing Ontario's retirement future.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): New question. The member from Ottawa Centre.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: My question is to the Minister of Transportation.

Mr. Speaker, Ottawa is a world-class city. It is not only a great place to live, but also a destination for businesses and tourists. My constituents and those who visit the city are able to experience and appreciate so much of what the city has to offer.

Being a world-class city means we also need a world-class transit system. That is why, with the support of the Ontario government, Ottawa is building the Ottawa LRT

system. This \$2.1-billion Confederation Line is a solution for our transit needs. Not only that, but my constituents are thrilled that it will help promote the economy, culture and social benefits of the great city of Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Can you please speak to the investments we've made so far in the LRT?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to begin by thanking the new member from Ottawa—Orléans for that fantastic question. Our government has also recognized the impact that the Ottawa LRT will have on the city of Ottawa. It is indeed a world-class city, a city whose population is expected to grow by 30% up until 2031, and public transportation is already nearing its capacity in the downtown core.

These are some of the reasons why, in 2009, our government committed up to \$600 million toward stage 1 of the Ottawa LRT project. Thanks to the advocacy of all of the caucus members whom we have on this side from Ottawa, that is the single largest investment ever made to the city's public transit system from the provincial government.

The LRT is something that all of our Ottawa caucus members have advocated for. Through them, the government has recognized the impact this would have on residents, tourists and business within that city. Construction began on the Confederation Line in April 2013, and the city of Ottawa projects that this project will create approximately 20,000 jobs.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): To correct my record—I apologize: the member from Ottawa—Orléans on a supplementary.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Merci, monsieur le Président, and thank you to the minister for his response. The benefits of the project to our city are vast, both socially and economically.

Ottawa's prosperity depends on moving people more efficiently. The LRT will mean reliable commuting, lower emissions and quieter neighbourhoods, all while creating jobs. It is estimated that 67% of the residents of Ottawa will live within five kilometres of the LRT. I know we're excited to see the completed LRT going down the road in 2018.

What's even more encouraging to the people of Ottawa—Orléans and the rest of the city of Ottawa is that our government's investments haven't stopped here. Can the minister speak to what other investments the government of Ontario has made into the transportation infrastructure of Ottawa, and how my residents in Ottawa—Orléans have benefited from this government?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Again I thank the member from Ottawa—Orléans for that fantastic follow-up. Easing congestion and helping commuters get home quicker is one of our government's main objectives, and that's why we've committed approximately \$1.09 billion to support public transit in Ottawa since 2003. This includes \$27 million for transit maintenance and approximately \$314 million in gas tax funding.

Specifically as part of the Ottawa LRT agreement, we have also committed to widening Highway 417 between Nicholas Street and the Ottawa Road 174 split. This will help ensure that the Ottawa LRT is successful.

As the member knows—as every member knows—our budget includes our Moving Ontario Forward plan. This is a plan that would see a record investment of \$29 billion to support transportation infrastructure: \$15 billion within the GTHA and \$14 billion for the rest of the province. Investments like these will help to boost our economy and break the congestion that is costing us billions of dollars a year.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Jim McDonell: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development. Since taking over government just 10 years ago, my riding of Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry has lost over 4,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs.

In just the past few months, three more companies have announced that they are closing their doors. American Standard, Canlyte Philips and Sensient BioPharma are consolidating their operations and moving almost 300 jobs to our US neighbours.

When will the minister realize that they need to tackle the out-of-control regulation, fees, taxation and hydro rates that are making our province uncompetitive and unattractive to businesses that are not receiving your government's corporate giveaways?

Hon. Brad Duguid: No matter how hard the PCs try to spin it, no matter how hard they try to talk down Ontario's economy, the fact of the matter is that it is a fact that we are up 460,000 net jobs since the recession.

If the member opposite really cared about jobs in this province, he'd be supporting the budget that we want to get moved forward this summer, before the House adjourns. If he was really concerned about jobs and the economy, he'd be supporting our \$2.5-billion Jobs and Prosperity Fund that is designed to continue to attract investment into this province and that has made us number one in North America for foreign direct investment. That helps all sectors of our economy.

If he really cared about jobs in this province, he'd be supporting our budget, which invests \$130 billion in infrastructure, creating and supporting up to 100,000 jobs every single year—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

1120

Mr. Jim McDonell: Back to the minister: Ontario's unemployment rate has been above the national average for over 90 months. The government has managed to lose almost 50,000 private sector jobs last month alone. Our public services rely on a healthy private sector that generates wealth and prosperity, but this government seems bent on driving our private sector out of Ontario.

Minister, will you tackle the competitive issues that are forcing our private sector companies to move to neigh-

bouring states and provinces, or will you stand idly by as our skilled workforce languishes in the unemployment line?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, we've just brought forward a budget that totally focuses on creating jobs and building a stronger economy. In stark contrast to that, you just fought an election on a platform that does nothing but kill jobs across this province. I'm not just talking about the 100,000 jobs you directly wanted to kill. I'm talking about the 500,000 jobs that you and your party would place at risk directly and indirectly in our auto sector. I'm talking about the 50,000 jobs that we're creating through our regional economic development funds and our partnerships with OpenText and other companies like Cisco—50,000 jobs under you that would be gone. I'm talking about the 30,000 clean energy jobs that you do not support and the clean energy economy that you would bring to an end.

Mr. Speaker, if you add it all up—they talked about a million jobs that they were going to bring in—they'd be putting a million jobs at risk.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

A few days ago, Premier, you claimed that a high-speed rail link between London and Toronto was possible within a decade, and yet high-speed rail is mentioned nowhere in your budget—no timelines, no funding, nothing at all.

If the Premier really intends to build high-speed rail to London, why isn't it mentioned anywhere in her budget?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member from London for that question.

Obviously, high-speed rail is very, very important to our government. It's very important to the people of London, Kitchener-Waterloo and communities like Windsor and beyond. I think it's important for everyone to understand that with almost \$14 billion in new revenue tools that are provided for in the budget to fund transportation projects outside of the GTHA, the high-speed rail project is one of the ones that we plan to pursue to help create jobs and help boost the economy in the London area.

As you may know, the government has undertaken a pre-feasibility study—the Ministry of Transportation has done that work—and we are working hard to work with all partners, municipalities and everyone else in the system to develop an implementation plan that makes sense. This is why, as we've said throughout this week, throughout the budget debate, it's very important for members, particularly from those communities that will benefit greatly from the investments we plan to make, to support our budget, work with us and get on with the projects.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: There is no funding for high-speed rail in the budget. It's not even mentioned in

your budget. In fact, the government has been silent on how it will pay for transportation priorities that are mentioned in the budget. The government has only found half the money needed to pay for existing transportation promises—not including the magical high-speed rail line. How will the government make up the difference? By selling public assets? By cutting programs?

Mr. Speaker, Ontarians deserve the truth. Will the Premier finally admit that she can't keep her promises and that her government will deliver austerity, not high-speed rail?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member opposite again for that follow-up question.

I thought that I was fairly clear in my initial response regarding how very clearly our budget lays out a plan to make transportation and public transit investments right across the province of Ontario—\$29 billion. I've said that repeatedly since having the chance to serve in this particular capacity. That includes close to \$14 billion for transit and transportation infrastructure projects in areas outside of the GTHA, which would, of course, include the community of London. As I mentioned a second ago, the Ministry of Transportation has undertaken a pre-feasibility study. We are in the process of finalizing a business case and embarking on an environmental assessment.

I would ask the member opposite again to consider supporting the budget that we have introduced in this House. It includes the funding for \$14 billion worth of projects which would benefit the people of London—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: You should support this project—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. When I stand, you sit.

New question.

ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Granville Anderson: My question is for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. This government has been investing in people, investing in infrastructure and supporting an innovative and dynamic business environment. We all recognize that strong and vibrant aboriginal communities strengthen Ontario culturally, socially and economically.

Minister, while we are making progress across many different areas, can you please elaborate on how we have been helping to improve and create greater economic opportunities with the aboriginal communities in Ontario?

Hon. David Zimmer: We are active on many fronts, creating opportunities for the private sector, First Nations and Métis communities to participate in a meaningful way in our plan to grow Ontario's economy.

The 2014 budget, if passed, includes an Aboriginal Economic Development Fund, which includes an investment of \$25 million over three years. The fund will support aboriginal communities in the development of long-term economic strategies. It will also provide grants

for aboriginal businesses and fund province-wide regional skills training.

This government recognizes the importance of economic development for aboriginal communities and wants to see meaningful employment and business development for all aboriginal communities in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Granville Anderson: Thank you, Minister. This is great news. Obviously this is a great investment in helping people, communities and businesses to create a more robust business environment.

The Aboriginal Loan Guarantee Program was announced as part of the 2009 budget as a way to both enhance aboriginal participation in Ontario infrastructure and encourage forays into renewable green energy.

Last week, I joined the minister in a meeting with Chief Marsden of Alderville First Nation near my riding of Durham to hear an update on the Alderville solar project. Thanks to the loan guarantee program, it is the province's first ground-mounted solar farm wholly owned by a First Nation community.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, what is Ontario doing to ensure that more communities can benefit from this program?

Hon. David Zimmer: The 2014 budget, if passed, would continue the Aboriginal Loan Guarantee Program which was launched in 2009 to facilitate aboriginal participation in renewable energy infrastructure projects.

To date, the program has leveraged significant investments, with \$130 million in approved loan guarantees which have supported investments of eight communities, representing over 10,000 First Nations people, in four projects that have parlayed the investment into a total of \$2.8 billion for the province.

I did have the pleasure last week to meet with Chief Marsden of Alderville First Nation, along with the member for Durham, and I'm happy to say one of the four projects includes the recently approved loan guarantee that will support a portion of the Alderville First Nation's equity investment in the Alderville solar project, making it the first 100% aboriginal-owned solar project in Ontario.

The guarantee works to the benefit of all people—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question?

SKILLED TRADES

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: To the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities: Bernie Fishbein worked as an advocate for the electricians' union, representing them in over 60 separate legal cases over the past 20 years. Despite this obvious conflict of interest, your College of Trades saw fit to appoint him as the chair of the electricians' ratio review panel, where he went on to recommend the ratio proposed by the union that employed him for 20 years. Minister, it is unbelievable that you have accepted this conflict of interest and done nothing about it. Yesterday, the minister told the House he was going to

appoint an adviser to review the boondoggle at the College of Trades.

In spite of his clear conflict of interest and in spite of an ongoing judicial review into his bias, Bernie Fishbein is apparently being considered for this job—a whole review of the College of Trades.

To the minister: Will you be appointing this long-time paid advocate of the electricians' union, Bernie Fishbein, to be your adviser for the planned review of the Ontario College of Trades?

1130

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member opposite for that question.

The College of Trades has been doing a great job since it started its operations just over a year ago. We created this college because we believe that the tradespeople there can decide on their own profession. That's why we have created the College of Trades—and not only that, but to raise the profile of the tradespeople, because we believe that electricians, mechanics, other professionals and other tradespeople have the same rights as doctors, dentists, teachers and others to regulate their own profession. That's why we created the College of Trades, and they have been doing a great job since they started their operation about a year ago.

In the past 14 or 15 months since their operation, they have reviewed 33 professions—33 trades—and they have reduced the ratios in 14 of them. I'll address the question in the second part, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Well, you didn't address the first part of the question.

First of all, let's correct the record. Under Fishbein's biased recommendation, Ontario raised apprenticeship ratios for the electrician trade from 3 to 1 to 6 to 1. That is more than double. They got exactly what the union wanted. Second, the College of Trades is a boondoggle. You have to know that no one likes it after all this.

Special interest groups are running the place. They are restricting competition and are raising the cost of hiring tradespeople for Ontario companies. Also, young Ontarians are in fact leaving to take apprenticeships in other provinces.

To the minister: Have you had any discussions with special interest groups regarding the appointment of this adviser, Mr. Bernie Fishbein, to the Ontario College of Trades? Minister, what deals have been made regarding Bernie Fishbein's appointment?

Hon. Reza Moridi: The College of Trades, as I said, has been doing a great job. In relation to the conflict of interest—the member referring to it—the case is before the courts, so I'm not going to comment on that.

But since we created the College of Trades—for the past many, many years, when the member opposite's party was in office, they never reviewed any single profession's ratios; they never did it. But the College of Trades, within just 14, 15 months since its operation, reviewed the ratios in 33 professions, Mr. Speaker—33 trades—

and they reduced the ratios in 14 of them. So they have been doing a great job.

This is the first time in the history of the province that we have a regulatory college for tradespeople. They actually love to have this college. They want to have the college; they want to decide on their own profession. That's why we created the college, and tradespeople like the college, in contrast to what the member opposite is claiming.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): New question? The member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Mr. Michael Mantha: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to you. My question is to the Minister of Labour.

Yesterday, the members of this Legislature rose for a moment of silence for a miner, Pascal Goulet, 38, leaving behind his spouse and two daughters, killed tragically last Thursday at his job at North American Palladium. Unfortunately, Mr. Goulet is the seventh miner killed on the job this year in Ontario.

One death is too many, but seven is an outrage. Miners and their families have a right to expect that they'll come home safe at the end of their shift. What will this minister do today to ensure that not one more miner is killed in this province, and that their workplaces are safe?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I do thank the honourable member for that very, very important question. I was saddened to hear of the incident, as all of us were around the House. My thoughts are with this person's family and the colleagues that he was working with.

I understand that we have Ministry of Labour inspectors investigating on the site. The ministry's priority in this regard is to ensure that the Occupational Health and Safety Act is followed and enforced. The investigation is ongoing, Speaker. As you know, it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the specific circumstances related to this incident.

I will tell you, though, that this government is committed to protecting the health and safety of miners and all workers in Ontario. Right now, our Chief Prevention Officer is leading a comprehensive mining safety review. It's got an external group of industry, labour and health and safety reps. It's a year-long review. I look forward to those findings. And Speaker, to answer the question specifically, I look forward to acting upon those findings.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member from Essex.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Again to the Minister of labour: Last year, the Premier rejected an inquiry into mining deaths and instead chose to review health and safety. But at the very first public hearings, the government didn't even advertise to invite participants. While we eagerly await the review's findings, miners in this province continue to die.

Based on the Westray law and supported by the United Steelworkers, which represents miners across this

country, Nova Scotia recently decided to create a special prosecutor to enforce workplace safety standards.

Will the minister act today on the appalling seven mining industry deaths this year and create a special prosecutor to enforce workplace safety standards in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: As the previous questioner noted, one death is too many. Seven is not good; one is not good.

Between March and June of this year, we've had 12 public consultation dates. We've been to Timmins, Kirkland Lake, Sudbury, Red Lake, Marathon and London to ensure that the mining sector itself—safety representatives from labour and business—is able to provide input into the mining review.

This is a review that we intend on acting upon, obviously, once we've heard from everybody. Over 150 people to date have participated in these public meetings. We've got over 60 written submissions. We're working very, very hard with the Chief Prevention Officer. As I said, Speaker, I look forward to the findings. When those findings are in, we intend to act upon those findings.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Finance, on a point of order.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Just on a point of order, Mr. Speaker: We have young people who participate in politics. It's always nice to acknowledge interns who show up and want to do this. I'd like to acknowledge Aashish Oberor and Shaunt Tchakmak, who are here today as interns participating in the political process.

DEFERRED VOTES

2014 ONTARIO BUDGET

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1137 to 1142.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Everyone take their seats, please.

On July 14, Mr. Sousa moved, seconded by Ms. Wynne, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government. All those in favour of the motion, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Baker, Yvan
Balkissoon, Bas
Ballard, Chris
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bradley, James J.

Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fraser, John
Gravelle, Michael
Hoggarth, Ann
Hoskins, Eric
Hunter, Miltzie
Jaczek, Helena

McMeekin, Ted
Meilleure, Madeleine
Milczyn, Peter Z.
Moridi, Reza
Murray, Glen R.
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir

Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad

Kiwala, Sophie
Kwinter, Monte
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor

Oraziotti, David
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sergio, Mario
Sousa, Charles
Takhar, Harinder S.
Vernile, Daiane
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.
Arnott, Ted
Barrett, Toby
Bisson, Gilles
Cimino, Joe
Clark, Steve
Dunlop, Garfield
Elliott, Christine
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne

Gélinas, France
Gretzky, Lisa
Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Hatfield, Percy
Horwath, Andrea
Jones, Sylvia
MacLeod, Lisa
Mantha, Michael
Martow, Gila
McDonell, Jim
Miller, Paul

Munro, Julia
Natyshak, Taras
Nicholls, Rick
Pettapiece, Randy
Sattler, Peggy
Singh, Jagmeet
Smith, Todd
Tabuns, Peter
Taylor, Monique
Thompson, Lisa M.
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 57; the nays are 36.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no further votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1146 to 1500.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Introduction of guests? Introduction of guests? Last—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All of these wonderful people who are in the gallery today, we welcome them all.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I've done that in the past.

It's now time for members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LYME DISEASE

Ms. Laurie Scott: I rise on behalf of the growing number of people in my riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock whose lives have been shattered by Lyme disease.

Like many MPPs, I've stood in this place to introduce petitions on behalf of the people I represent, pleading to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care for us to do better for patients with Lyme disease.

This disease is increasingly endemic throughout Canada and is now on the rise in central Ontario, but

scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in the Ontario public health system and through the Ontario Health Insurance Plan. This forces patients to seek testing procedures in the USA at a great financial cost.

I've heard many stories from constituents where stories range from anti, like from a person who, after five years of testing, was finally diagnosed with Lyme disease, but had to go to the US and have that test confirmed—she was able to receive some treatment in Ontario from an infectious disease specialist. The treatment was working, but the doctor said he had to cut her off, that his hands were tied, and he recommended that she had to go to British Columbia for treatment.

Our health care system can do better. People with Lyme disease are suffering. They have precious little time to be diagnosed and treated with effectiveness. So I take the time again to ask the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to take real action to help those suffering from Lyme disease.

MEMBER FOR HAMILTON EAST— STONEY CREEK

Mr. Paul Miller: Speaker, I want to start off by thanking everyone who worked on my re-election campaign and those who gave their time, energy and money to all candidates. Without volunteers, none of us would be able to run our election campaigns. I congratulate you on your successful campaigns but, to be completely honest, there are some ridings that lost good, honest, hard-working, experienced MPPs, and to those constituents I express my heartfelt sorrow at your loss.

We will miss the wise counsel and depth of knowledge and commitment that this Legislature has lost with the departure of Michael Prue, Rosario Marchese and Jonah Schein.

I'm pleased to have been appointed again as third deputy speaker, a job that I found to be fulfilling and one that has expanded my knowledge of the Legislature and the traditions of this House.

As well as returning as third deputy speaker, I'm also returning as the NDP's critic for tourism, culture and sport, and the Pan/Parapan Am Games. This portfolio is exciting, especially as we count down to the final year to the official opening to the games. Although I'm extremely excited that our many athletes will have the opportunity to wow us with their skills and athletic prowess, I will remain vigilant in my efforts to ensure that the games come in on time and on budget in safe venues.

WATERLOO REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE

Ms. Daiene Vernile: This past April, Waterloo Regional Police Service said farewell to former chief of police Matt Torigian, when he announced that he'd be retiring after 29 years of service. While we in Waterloo

region are sad to see him go, we're proud that Mr. Torigian will continue to share his expertise with the people of Ontario as the new deputy minister for Community Safety and Correctional Services.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I just ran into him in the hallway. He was sitting in front of the Premier's office. He and I go back a long ways, when our kids were in elementary school together in Kitchener.

On behalf of the citizens of Waterloo region, I am pleased to rise in the Legislature today to offer congratulations to our newly appointed chief of police in Waterloo region, Mr. Bryan Larkin.

Chief Larkin started his distinguished career as a cadet in 1991 before becoming a constable with our local police force. From there he spent 20 years serving in a number of roles within the WRPS, including superintendent to divisional commander.

In 2011, Mr. Larkin joined the Guelph Police Service, serving first as deputy chief and then as chief of police for the past two years. Chief Larkin is returning home to Waterloo region, bringing with him a track record of exceptional commitment to public service and proven leadership.

I ask all members of the House to join me in congratulating Chief Larkin on his appointment as our new chief of police and wishing him all the best in this new role.

WHEATLEY FISH FESTIVAL

Mr. Rick Nicholls: In the little fishing village of Wheatley, Ontario, the Freshwater Fish Capital of the World, they will soon be celebrating their 100th anniversary. What better way to kick off the festivities than the annual Wheatley Fish Festival running from August 1 to 3?

For the third year in a row, one of the head organizers of this fun-filled fish festival is Sue Adamson, who, by the way, heads up my constituency office in Leamington. Sue and her team are excited to once again bring this highly anticipated event to Wheatley.

The Wheatley Legion is proud to host the smoke-filled smoked fish contest on Friday. I will be honoured to help judge some of those samples.

Wheatley's world famous all-you-can-eat yellow perch and roasted chicken dinner will be held on Saturday from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Wheatley arena at a cost of only \$20 per person. There's even live music running from 9 p.m. until 1 a.m.

Saturday features the annual fish festival parade, starting at 11 a.m. from the Wheatley arena, heading south on Erie Street. Who doesn't love a parade?

Other highlights include the Big Boyz Fishing Tournament, which runs from July 25 until August 3, drawing hundreds of fishing enthusiasts from across Ontario and the United States.

The festival celebrates the best of Wheatley: world-class freshwater fish and great community spirit. Try to say all those Fs in a row.

I invite all the members of this Legislature to come on down to the Wheatley Fish Festival located on the north shore of Lake Erie and tucked away in the southern part of the great riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex this August long weekend.

ESSEX MEMORIAL SPITFIRE GROUP

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It's an honour to rise today to acknowledge and to thank the members of the Essex Memorial Spitfire project in coordination with the Southern Ontario Military Muster, which will, in very short order, deliver a full-size replica of the legendary Spitfire fighter plane, the type used in World War II, to the town of Essex.

This group of dedicated volunteers has been driven by the need that exists in our community to honour all of Essex county's RAF/RCAF veterans by dedicating this full-scale World War II Spitfire. In particular, members of this group have worked expeditiously to ensure that legendary ace and hometown hero Jerry Billing could attend the unveiling. The Spitfire will be painted as it appeared on D-Day, June 6, 1944, as it was flown by Essex's own Spitfire ace Jerry Billing in the 401 Squadron of the Royal Canadian Air Force.

As a young boy, Jerry dreamed of flying after reading books about World War I pilots. When World War II started, Jerry knew it was his chance to fly. With a career that spans over 50 years, Jerry Billing is one of Canada's most distinguished pilots.

I want to thank members of the Essex Memorial Spitfire group: Karen Billing, who is Jerry's wife; Erik Billing, Jerry's son; Bob Swaddling; Monica Totten; Joseph Gibson; Linda Iler; Suzanne Allison; Geoff Bottoms; Gunilla Dittman; Bill Reilly; Michael Beale; Michael Kohuch; Garry Selby and Dave Cheeseman.

I encourage people to visit the Southern Ontario Military Muster website to make a personal donation. Their efforts to preserve and to pay tribute to servicemen and -women like Jerry Billing will indeed stand as a lasting testament and our thanks for their service to our communities and to our country.

ANNA DESMARAIS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I would like to start by introducing Anna Desmarais. There she is up in the press gallery. Anna is an intern in the legislative press gallery here at Queen's Park. Anna is a constituent of mine. She was born and raised in Orléans. She went to Maple Ridge Elementary School and then to Colonel By Secondary School, where she enrolled in the IB program.

Je suis très fière d'indiquer qu'Anna est native d'Orléans. Elle se prépare à entamer, en septembre, sa deuxième année à l'Université Carleton dans le programme de journalisme.

She is one of many of my riding's youth who is excelling. I am thrilled to see her succeeding in her field. I want to commend her and highlight what an achievement it is to get this internship.

I want to point out to the Speaker that she was the only intern chosen from journalism programs across the province.

1510

Anna had the amazing opportunity to cover the election by attending different events for all the leaders and boarding the press buses.

J'ai eu le plaisir de rencontrer Anna la semaine dernière alors qu'elle venait m'interviewer au bureau, and she did not hold back. I was so impressed by her composure and professionalism that I had to share her story with this House.

To Anna, best of luck in the rest of your internship and your journalism program at Carleton. I have no doubt—no doubt—we will be seeing your name in print soon.

Alors, Anna, je te dis bonne chance dans tout ce que tu entreprendras dans les années à venir.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Ted Arnott: On June 20, we were all pleased to hear confirmation that the Ministry of Health finally appears to be covering the cost of Kalydeco, a new medication which appears to be a miracle treatment for some cystic fibrosis patients.

As members may recall, I've been advocating for funding for Kalydeco for CF patients since December 2012, when this issue was first brought to my attention by my constituents Nigel and Shelley Phipps from Georgetown. Their daughter Maddie has cystic fibrosis, and her health has improved dramatically since she started taking Kalydeco. I know that this news is a huge relief for the Phipps family as well as many other families across Ontario, like the Bain family from Georgetown and the Shaw family from Fergus, who also have children who have received treatment with Kalydeco.

I also want to acknowledge our leader, the member for Simcoe–Grey, and our health critic, the member for Whitby–Oshawa. They, too, worked hard to raise awareness and urged the government to do the right thing.

On Sunday night, I had the chance to speak to our former colleague from Halton, Ted Chudleigh, who was also very supportive of funding for Kalydeco. He pointed out that while Kalydeco is now covered by OHIP, there may be families who have spent many thousands of dollars out of their own pockets over the past few months for Kalydeco. While some patients may have been covered by private insurance or supported by community fundraisers, I would encourage the Minister of Health to instruct his staff to look into this on a compassionate case-by-case basis and compensate the families who may have had no alternative but to pay for Kalydeco out of their own pockets.

BIG ON BLOOR FESTIVAL

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Today I want to recognize one of the outstanding festivals taking place this weekend in my riding of Davenport. Fast becoming known as one

of Canada's most original and innovative festivals, BIG on Bloor is a fun, free, car-free, all-encompassing, unique and city-building festival for all ages that celebrates the arts, culture, community and small business.

The BIG on Bloor Festival takes place annually along Bloor Street between Dufferin and Lansdowne and is an initiative of the Bloordale BIA; BIG, the Bloor Improvement Group; and the Bloordale community.

BIG awards lead the BIG on Bloor Festival opening ceremonies, where community awards are presented to honour exceptional citizens for their effort, talent and goodwill.

BIG on Bloor features hundreds of events and activities. More than 200 participants will feature table exhibitions that line the street and present their projects, products, consumer goods, information or events. There are interactive games, craft tables and attractions for families and children of all ages.

The volunteers and organizers of the BIG on Bloor Festival deserve all of our thanks for this great community event. I would like to acknowledge and thank BIG on Bloor Festival director Dougal Bichan and the members of his committee: Dyan Marie, Sid Bruyn, Marjolein Winterink, Jeremy Fink, Carla Garnet, Spiro Koumoudouros and Rotem Yaniv. Thank you to all of you for giving effortlessly to this wonderful community event.

I invite you all to join me in Davenport to attend the seventh BIG on Bloor Festival on July 19 and 20.

BOOTS AND HEARTS MUSIC FESTIVAL

Mr. Granville Anderson: I am inviting all members of the Legislature and all Ontarians to join me in experiencing the award-winning annual country music festival which is taking place in my riding of Durham. The Boots and Hearts Music Festival at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park, which is Canada's most historic racetrack, is taking place from July 31 to August 3. The festival is run by Republic Live.

While full-event tickets for the Boots and Hearts Music Festival sold out on December 30, 2013, other tickets for this country music festival are still available.

The Boots and Hearts Music Festival is expecting to attract 25,000 people. It is considered the largest country music festival in Canada. As an international destination, Boots and Hearts attracts a global audience to Clarington. Ticket buyers for Boots and Hearts included representation from all provinces and territories in Canada, 23 states in the US, and four foreign countries. I imagine there are people attending from all ridings within Ontario.

The Ontario government, in 2013, awarded this festival the maximum amount of \$350,000 in its second year of operation under the Celebrate Ontario initiative.

I look forward to working with Boots and Hearts to ensure that their world-class festival is held in Clarington for many years to come.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CHRISTMAS TREE DAY ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LE JOUR DE L'ARBRE DE NOËL

Mr. Wilson moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 16, An Act to proclaim Christmas Tree Day /
Projet de loi 16, Loi proclamant le Jour de l'arbre de Noël.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Today I'm reintroducing the Christmas Tree Day Act, which, if passed, will designate the first Saturday in December of each year as Christmas Tree Day in Ontario.

I want to thank Fred Somerville and Shirley Brennan of the Christmas Tree Farmers of Ontario for the inspiration behind this bill and for their advocacy.

This industry brings tremendous economic, environmental and social benefits to our province, employing thousands of workers in the farming, transportation and retail sectors.

An interesting fact, Mr. Speaker: They sell one million Christmas trees around Christmas season in this province, and they plant one million seedlings each year to replace those trees, so it's great for the environment.

I hope all members can support this.

PROTECTING CHILD PERFORMERS ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA PROTECTION DES ENFANTS ARTISTES

Mr. Paul Miller moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 17, An Act to protect child performers in the live entertainment industry and the recorded entertainment industry / Projet de loi 17, Loi visant à protéger les enfants artistes dans l'industrie du spectacle vivant et l'industrie du spectacle enregistré.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Paul Miller: This bill enacts the Protecting Child Performers Act, 2014. The paramount purpose of the act is to promote the best interests, protection and well-being of child performers in the live entertainment industry and the recorded entertainment industry.

Parts II, III and IV of the act set out rules relating to the disclosure of terms of employment, tutoring requirements, income protection, hours of work and adult supervision for child performers. Most provisions in parts

II, III and IV are enforced as if they formed part of the Employment Standards Act, 2000.

Part V of the act sets out rules relating to the health and safety of child performers. Part V and the remaining provisions in parts II, III and IV are enforced as if they form part of the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

The act provides that if there is a conflict between a provision of the act and a rule contained in the collective agreement, a contract or another act, the rule that provides the greatest protection to the child performer prevails.

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STRONGER WORKPLACES FOR A STRONGER ECONOMY ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DU LIEU DE TRAVAIL AU SERVICE D'UNE ÉCONOMIE PLUS FORTE

Mr. Flynn moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 18, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour/ Projet de loi 18, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi et la main-d'oeuvre.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister for a short statement.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Very briefly, the bill includes provisions of the previously tabled Fair Minimum Wage Act within it. It will, if passed, take important steps to ensure that every Ontarian gets the paycheque they have earned at the end of the day. It better protects our most vulnerable persons who work from dangerous working situations and it will increase the competitiveness for businesses in Ontario who already play by the rules.

OMBUDSMAN AMENDMENT ACT (INVESTIGATION OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES), 2014

LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'OMBUDSMAN (ENQUÊTES SUR LES SERVICES DE SOINS DE SANTÉ)

M^{me} Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 19, An Act to amend the Ombudsman Act with respect to investigating specified health care services/ Projet de loi 19, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'ombudsman en ce qui a trait aux enquêtes sur des services de soins de santé précisés.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

M^{me} France Gélinas: The bill amends the Ombudsman Act to give power to the Ombudsman to receive complaints from any Ontarian, their family or advocates, to do anything it may do with respect to a governmental organization under the Ombudsman Act, such as investigating decisions and recommendations made, as well as action and inaction, and using his or her power of entry, for the purpose of investigation, to a home for special care, long-term-care home, community care access corporation, hospital, ambulance service, air ambulance service or board of health.

The bill also gives the Ombudsman powers in respect to care services provided at retirement homes to make recommendations to any appropriate government organization and to compel action with the Premier or the assembly, and to give people who have been done wrong by our health care system an independent third party they can trust to investigate their complaint and gain closure.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND SITTINGS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Good afternoon, Speaker. I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding committees.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 113, the following standing committees be appointed for the duration of the 41st Parliament and that the membership of these committees be as follows:

The Standing Committee on Estimates: Mr. Balkissoon, Mr. Ballard, Mr. Crack, Mr. Dong, Ms. Kiwala, Mr. Harris, Mr. Hillier, Ms. Forster and Miss Taylor;

The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs: Mrs. Albanese, Mr. Baker, Ms. Hoggarth, Mr. Milczyn, Ms. Vernile, Ms. Wong, Mr. Fedeli, Mr. McNaughton and Ms. Fife;

The Standing Committee on General Government: Mr. Colle, Mr. Crack, Mr. Dickson, Ms. Hoggarth, Ms. Kiwala, Ms. McMahon, Ms. Thompson, Mr. Yurek and Mrs. Gretzky;

The Standing Committee on Government Agencies: Mr. Dhillon, Mr. Fraser, Mrs. Lalonde, Ms. Malhi, Mrs. Martins, Mr. Rinaldi, Mr. McDonnell, Mr. Pettapiece and Mr. Gates;

The Standing Committee on Justice Policy: Mr. Berardinetti, Mr. Delaney, Mrs. Martins, Ms. Naidoo-Harris, Mr. Potts, Mr. Qaadri, Mr. MacLaren, Mr. Smith and Mr. Cimino;

The Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly: Mr. Anderson, Mr. Balkissoon, Mr. Ballard, Ms. McMahon, Ms. Wong, Mr. Barrett, Mr. Dunlop, Ms. Scott and Mr. Singh;

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts: Mr. Dong, Mr. Fraser, Ms. Malhi, Mr. Potts, Mr. Rinaldi, Mr. Hardeman, Ms. MacLeod, Mrs. Munro and Mr. Hatfield;

The Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills: Mr. Berardinetti, Mr. Kwinter, Mrs. Mangat, Mrs. McGarry, Ms. Naidoo-Harris, Ms. Vernile, Mr. Walker, Mr. Bailey and Ms. French;

The Standing Committee on Social Policy: Mr. Anderson, Mr. Dhillion, Mrs. Lalonde, Mrs. Mangat, Mrs. McGarry, Ms. Elliott, Mrs. Martow, M^{me} Gélinas and Mr. Tabuns; and

That the following schedule for committee meetings be established for this Parliament, to come into effect on the first day the House meets in the fall sessional period:

The Standing Committee on Estimates: Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and following routine proceedings to 6 p.m., and Wednesdays following routine proceedings until 6 p.m.;

The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs: Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.;

The Standing Committee on General Government: Mondays from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., and Wednesdays from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.;

The Standing Committee on Government Agencies: Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.;

The Standing Committee on Justice Policy: Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.;

The Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly: Wednesdays from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.;

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts: Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.;

The Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills: Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.;

The Standing Committee on Social Policy: Mondays from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., and Tuesdays from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.;

That, when Bill 14, Building Opportunity and Securing our Future Act (Budget Measures), 2014, receives second reading, it shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, and for the purpose of considering Bill 14, the Chair shall be Ms. Wong and the Vice-Chair shall be Mr. Milczyn; and

The committee is authorized to meet for the purpose of public hearings on Bill 14 on Monday, July 21, 2014, from 9 a.m. to noon and from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.; and

Witnesses shall be scheduled in rounds from the list of requests to appear provided by the Clerk of the Committee to each recognized party. The deadline for providing requests to appear before the committee shall be no later than noon on Friday, July 18, 2014, with each witness to receive up to 10 minutes for their presentation, followed by six minutes for questions from committee members; and

The deadline for written submissions is 4 p.m. on the day of public hearings; and

The deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 6 p.m. on Monday, July 21, 2014; and

The committee is authorized to meet for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill on Tuesday, July 22, 2014, from 9 a.m. to noon and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., and at 2 p.m. on that day, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession, with one 20-minute waiting period allowed, pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

The committee shall report the bill to the House on Wednesday, July 23, 2014. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on Wednesday, July 23, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee; and

That the Select Committee on Developmental Services, established by order of the House in the 40th Parliament on October 3, 2013, be re-established for the purpose of re-adopting its final report with the following membership: Mrs. Albanese, Chair, Ms. Elliott, Vice-Chair, Mr. Balkissoon, Ms. DiNovo, Ms. Jones, Mr. MacLaren, Mrs. Martins, Mrs. Taylor and Ms. Wong;

That the committee shall meet from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. on Monday, July 21, 2014; and

The committee shall present its final report no later than Tuesday, July 22, 2014, with respect to the following terms of reference: to consider and report to the House its observations and recommendations with respect to the urgent need for a comprehensive developmental services strategy to address the needs of children, youth and adults in Ontario with an intellectual disability or who are dually diagnosed with an intellectual disability and a mental illness; and

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To coordinate the delivery of developmental programs and services across many provincial ministries in addition to the Ministry of Community and Social Services; and

That in developing its strategy and recommendations, the committee shall focus on the following issues:

—the elementary and secondary school educational needs of children and youth;

—the educational and workplace needs of youth upon completion of secondary school;

—the need to provide social, recreational and inclusive opportunities for children, youth and adults;

—the need for a range of available and affordable housing options for youth and adults;

—the respite and support needs of families;

—how government shall most appropriately support these needs and provide these opportunities.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On a point of order, the member from Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Just to make sure that your paper copy, on page 3, doesn't have Mr. Berardinetti showing up twice on the same committee. It's duplicated in the motion.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): So noted.

Mr. Naqvi moves that notwithstanding standing order 113, the following standing—

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? Dispensed.

Agreed? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thought the member from Timmins–James Bay wanted me to read the whole thing.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that one member from the governing party, two from the official opposition and one from the third party be authorized to attend the 2014 annual conference of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees, such members to be indicated in writing to the Clerk of the House by their respective whip no later than 5 p.m. on Monday, July 21, 2014.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Naqvi moves that one member from the governing party, two from the official opposition and one member—

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? Dispensed.

Agreed? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader wishes to put forward a motion without notice. De we agree? Agreed?

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that notwithstanding standing order 98(b), the following changes be made to the ballot list for private members' public business: Mr. Potts and Mr. Delaney exchange places in the order of

precedence such that Mr. Potts assumes ballot item number two and Mr. Delaney assumes ballot item number 17.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Naqvi moves that notwithstanding standing order 98(b), the following changes be made to the ballot list for private members' public business: Mr. Potts and Mr. Delaney—

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? Dispensed.

Agreed? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

Mr. Bill Walker: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario's tradespeople are subject to stifling regulation and are compelled to pay membership fees to the unaccountable College of Trades; and

“Whereas these fees are a tax grab that drives down the wages of skilled tradespeople; and

“Whereas Ontario desperately needs a plan to solve our critical shortage of skilled tradespeople by encouraging our youth to enter the trades and attracting new tradespeople; and

“Whereas the current policies of the McGuinty/Wynne Liberal government only aggravate the looming skilled trades shortage in Ontario;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To immediately disband the College of Trades, cease imposing needless membership fees and enact policies to attract young Ontarians into skilled trade careers.”

I support this petition and will send it with page Tania to the Clerks' table.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Manitoulin—Algonia—Algonia—Manitoulin.

ONTARIO RANGER PROGRAM

Mr. Michael Mantha: You were almost going to throw Hamilton in there, too, eh, Mr. Speaker? It's a big riding.

This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, draw attention to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to the following:

“The Ontario Ranger Program takes youth out of their comfort zones by taking youth from the south and placing them in northern camps and vice versa, allowing for personal growth;

“The Ontario Ranger Program also helps nearby rural communities as the Ontario Rangers help with various work projects and build partnerships within the communities; the work is recognized and appreciated by these small communities;

"An extensive amount of work maintaining the interior routes in major provincial parks such as Quetico, Algonquin and Temagami is completed by Ontario Rangers on multi-day overnight canoe trips...;

"The lifelong skills and friendships built during the Ontario Ranger Program help youth develop into mature, confident, independent individuals, which is well worth the money spent on the program;

"Low-income and high-risk youth sent to rangers are isolated from their home situation and are exposed to the positive team-building environment within the Ontario Ranger Program;

"Therefore, your petitioners call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demonstrate that the Ontario Ranger Program is a valuable program to the youth of Ontario, reverse the decision to close the Ontario Ranger Program...."

I support this petition and present it to page Lavanya to bring it down to the Clerks.

LCBO OUTLET

Ms. Laurie Scott: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the LCBO is opening a new location in Lindsay at Kent Street and requesting closure of the town's original location at Russell Street; and

"Whereas we the residents, with the support of current and past MPPs, councillors, BIA and other local businesses and we, the undersigned, request the province of Ontario to encourage the LCBO to leave our downtown LCBO in place for our residents and a large number of tourists;

"Therefore, we recommend the LCBO reconsider and leave our Russell store open as a pilot project to assist the business areas and maintain jobs in Lindsay."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll present it to page Émilie.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that was collected by Mr. Kent MacNeill from my riding, in Val Caron. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government has made ... (PET) scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients...; and

"Whereas, since October 2009, insured PET scans are performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with Health Sciences North, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

"We ... petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through Health Sciences North, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition. I will affix my name to it and ask page Lavanya to bring it to the Clerk.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

Mr. Jim Wilson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ministry of Health is planning on eliminating OHIP-funded physiotherapy services currently provided to seniors in retirement homes—and changing the current provider of the service as of August 1st, 2013; and

"Whereas the Minister of Health has announced a total of \$33 million in physiotherapy funding, or \$550 per senior, for 60,000 seniors, including those in retirement homes; and

"Whereas instead of the 100 to 150 visits per year a senior may now receive from their dedicated on-site OHIP physiotherapy staff, the change would mean a CCAC therapist would provide five to 10 visits on-site only to seniors who are bedridden or have an acute injury. All other ambulatory seniors would have to attend other community-locations/clinics for physiotherapy and exercise off-site...;"

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To review and reverse the decision to eliminate OHIP physiotherapy services to seniors in retirement homes, our most vulnerable population and most at risk for falls; and continue with the provision of at least 100 treatments per year with a mechanism to access an additional 50 treatments, if medically necessary, with the current low-cost OHIP physiotherapy providers."

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the petition and sign it. I thank you.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Michael Mantha: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas northern Ontario will suffer a huge loss of service as a result of government cuts to ServiceOntario counters;

"Whereas these cuts will have a negative impact on local businesses and local economies;

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"Whereas northerners will now face challenges in accessing their birth certificates, health cards and licences;

"Whereas northern Ontario should not unfairly bear the brunt of decisions to slash operating budgets;

"Whereas, regardless of address, all Ontarians should be treated equally by their government;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Review the decision to cut access to ServiceOntario for northerners, and provide northern Ontarians equal access to these services."

I agree with this petition, affix my signature and present it to Gabriel to bring it down to the Clerks.

CREDIT UNIONS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to present a petition today. It's a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario's economy and create jobs in three ways:

"—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

"—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

"—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries."

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me the time to present this petition.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): You're most welcome.

The member from Huron-Bruce—oh, sorry. She always does this to me at the very end. The member from Nickel Belt.

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Speaker. I'm glad you recognize me.

I'm here to present a petition that was gathered by Mrs. Sharon Duhamel from Lively in my riding. It reads as follows:

"Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline; and

"Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

"Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of gas-price regulation; and

"Whereas jurisdictions with gas-price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices;"

They "petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Gabriel to bring it to the Clerk.

LYME DISEASE

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's, Alzheimer's, arthritic diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe; and

"Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of their professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario Health Insurance Plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process for establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives 45% to 95% of the time;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health to direct that the Ontario public health system and OHIP include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme diagnosis, to do everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians."

I agree with this petition, affix my signature and I'll send it to the desk with Émilie.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Algoma-Manitoulin is on a roll.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

Mr. Michael Mantha: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas a motion was introduced at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads 'that in the opinion of the House, the operation of off-road vehicles on highways under regulation 316/03 be changed to include side-by-side off-road vehicles, four-seat side-by-side vehicles, and two-up vehicles in order for them to be driven on highways under the same conditions as other off-road/all-terrain vehicles';

"Whereas this motion was passed on November 7, 2013, to amend the Highway Traffic Act 316/03;

"Whereas the economic benefits will have positive impacts on ATV clubs, ATV manufacturers, dealers and rental shops, and will boost revenues to communities promoting this outdoor activity;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We call on the Ministry of Transportation to implement this regulation immediately."

I agree with this petition and present it to page Ayesha to bring down to the Clerks.

CREDIT UNIONS

Mr. Rick Nicholls: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

“Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers’ resources;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario’s economy and create jobs in three ways:

“—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

“—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

“—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries.”

I approve of this petition and I give it to page Gabriel.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Nickel Belt.

DENTAL CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Speaker. It’s nice to see that you’re looking my way.

I have this petition that comes to me from Michelle Ellery, who is from Hanmer in my riding. It reads as follows:

“Whereas thousands of Ontarians live with pain and infection because they cannot afford dental care;

“Whereas the promised \$45-million dental fund under the Poverty Reduction Strategy excluded impoverished adults;

“Whereas the program was designed with rigid criteria so that most of the people in need do not qualify; and

“Whereas desperately needed dental care money went unspent and was diverted to other areas even though people are still suffering without access to dental care;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario ... to do all in its power to stop the dental fund from being diverted to support other programs; and

“To fully utilize the commissioned funding to provide dental care” to all those who need it.

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Ayesha to bring it to the Clerk.

TIRE DISPOSAL

Mr. Bill Walker: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has approved massive increases to Ontario Tire Stewardship’s eco fees for agricultural tires, increasing some fees from \$15.29 to \$352.80, \$546.84 or \$1,311.24; and

“Whereas Ontario imposes tire eco fees that are dramatically higher than those in other provinces; and

“Whereas other provincial governments either exempt agricultural tires from recycling programs or charge fees only up to \$75; and

“Whereas these new fees will result in increased costs for our farmers and lost sales for our farm equipment dealerships; and

“Whereas the PC caucus has proposed a new plan that holds manufacturers and importers of tires responsible for recycling, but gives them the freedom to work with other businesses to find the best way possible to carry out that responsibility;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to please suspend the decision to significantly increase Ontario Tire Stewardship’s fees on agricultural and off-the-road tires pending a thorough impact study and implementation of proposals to lower costs.”

I support this and will send it to the desk with page Gabriel.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. The time for petitions is over.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUILDING OPPORTUNITY AND SECURING OUR FUTURE ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2014

LOI DE 2014 OUVRANT DES PERSPECTIVES ET ASSURANT NOTRE AVENIR (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Mr. Naqvi, on behalf of Mr. Sousa, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 14, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts/ Projet de loi 14, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker, for recognizing me. I will be speaking very briefly on this important piece of legislation and I will be sharing my time with the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, the member from York South–Weston.

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Speaker, it’s my great honour and pleasure to stand here today to speak in support of the budget bill, Bill 14,

the Building Opportunity and Securing Our Future Act. This bill very much builds on the government's plan to build up Ontario. This bill encapsulates the kinds of issues that we've been hearing from Ontarians across the province, issues like investing in our transit and transportation infrastructure, making sure that we're growing our economy, creating good-paying jobs and, of course, ensuring retirement income security for hard-working Ontarians who do not have a workplace pension.

Speaker, this budget bill and the budget that the government presented is a progressive and activist budget, very much designed to ensure that we are building our province, that we are building our communities, that we are making sure that Ontarians have the opportunities available to them across this province as we get ready and compete in the 21st century.

I encourage all members of this House to vote for the budget bill. This is an important piece of legislation, a very critical, important part of our plan. I very much look forward to voting in support of this bill and hearing the comments of other members.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I am very pleased to rise today for the second reading of Bill 14, the Building Opportunity and Securing Our Future Act.

This is our plan for building Ontario up today for a brighter, stronger tomorrow. Our plan takes immediate action to create jobs by investing in a highly skilled workforce, by building modern infrastructure and transportation networks, and by supporting a dynamic and innovative business climate.

Our plan would take steps to build the retirement security workers deserve, an initiative that would support long-term economic growth.

Mr. Speaker, our plan includes measures to continue managing responsibly to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18, and our plan includes strategic investments that build on the competitive advantages of Ontario's people and businesses. Our plan will create more opportunity and more security for people in every region of our province.

We are moving forward with our comprehensive and balanced approach to build more opportunity and more security for Ontarians in the global economy. Ontario continues to attract investments that are creating jobs, growing the economy and expanding opportunity for workers.

Ontarians are the strength of our province. Their skills, talent, diversity and competitiveness attract investment to Ontario. That is why we are planning to build on the strength of Ontario's people.

We will move ahead to build the potential of every Ontarian, of every child, of every student, of every worker in this province.

We know that quality education is one of the most important investments in a child's life. Our plan would see the implementation of full-day kindergarten by September 2014. This would modernize and strengthen the child care system, because every child in Ontario deserves the best possible start in life.

We would invest in classroom technology, giving Ontario's learners the tools they need to succeed and

making sure they are prepared to lead in the 21st-century economy.

Ontario remains among the best jurisdictions in North America for talent, training, and skills development. With more Ontarians pursuing post-secondary education, the province is helping students achieve their goals. We will be working to make post-secondary education more accessible. The 30% Off Ontario Tuition grant will make sure that up to 260,000 young people can afford to get a degree or a diploma. That will lead to more opportunity.

We will continue to help young people gain skills and experience to obtain stable employment. Mr. Speaker, Ontario's youth shouldered the brunt of job losses during the recent recession, and they continue to face an unacceptably high unemployment rate. Our plan proposes to extend Ontario's Youth Jobs Strategy by giving more young people the chance to find jobs, to start their businesses and to gain valuable skills. By building on people's talents and skills, we are investing in Ontario's bright future.

Our investments in schools, hospitals, and transportation infrastructure have made Ontario a great place to work and live, but we have to move Ontario forward to reduce congestion, to invest in roads, in bridges and in transit. The Building Opportunity and Securing Our Future Act would invest more than \$130 billion in infrastructure over the next 10 years. This would create employment. It would improve Ontario's productivity and support the jobs and growth of tomorrow.

We plan to move Ontario forward by dedicating new funding that would make nearly \$29 billion available over the next decade to build a province-wide transportation network to reduce commute times and to move goods to market faster. The two funds would be divided fairly and transparently by population so that the greater Toronto and Hamilton area would receive \$15 billion, and other regions of Ontario would receive nearly \$14 billion.

We plan to move Ontario forward by investing in strategic infrastructure across the province so that every region and community in Ontario can benefit from better roads, better public transit and better infrastructure.

We are committed to investing \$1 billion to develop strategic transportation infrastructure in the Ring of Fire, to unleash the true economic growth and job potential of northern Ontario and to extend opportunities for people in the north to reap the benefits of development in the area in the decades to come.

We will keep health care and education strong, because we know that our investments in the people's quality of life will also contribute to a strong economy. This bill would help support major hospital expansion and redevelopment projects, with more than \$11.4 billion over the next 10 years. By 2025, Ontario will benefit from state-of-the-art hospital facilities that offer quality services and treatments.

We will invest in our schools to build on Ontario's potential for leadership in the 21st century. We will invest more than \$11 billion over the next decade to continue building better places to learn and to modernize

elementary and secondary schools. We will expand post-secondary campuses to ensure that there are enough college and university spaces for Ontario's talented and ambitious young people.

Another part of our plan to build opportunity and secure our future is investing in strategic partnerships, strategic partnerships that will produce economic benefits for businesses, communities and people. Ontario has built a strong reputation as a hub for global businesses. Our province is ranked third in North America for foreign direct investments and we have been ranked as Canada's most competitive province and one of the best places for investment in business development. Our focus is to leverage business investment, to foster a climate of innovation and entrepreneurship and to create high-quality jobs for Ontario's talented workforce.

This bill includes initiatives that focus on local and international partnerships like expanding trade missions to increase the number of companies exporting, to help exporters find new markets and to attract new investments.

Our plan includes a new 10-year, \$2.5-billion Jobs and Prosperity Fund. That would improve Ontario's ability to attract business investments. With the new fund, the province would have the flexibility to offer strategic incentives, secure investments, help support growth and create well-paid jobs in Ontario.

I've talked about what our government is going to do to build on the strengths of the people of Ontario and I've highlighted our plan to move Ontario forward with strategic investments in infrastructure and transportation networks. I will now take a minute to explain how our plan would support a strong and secure retirement income system to help ensure that Ontarians are better able to enjoy their retirement years.

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As we know, the Canada Pension Plan is fundamental to the retirement income security of all Canadians. Several studies have shown that unless action is taken, many of today's workers may not be saving enough to maintain their current lifestyle in retirement, and this problem will likely only worsen over time. This is why we plan to introduce the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan to build on the strengths of the CPP. When combined with CPP payments, it would help provide the comfortable retirement that Ontarians deserve.

Our proposed made-in-Ontario pension plan will be championed by Mitzie Hunter, Associate Minister of Finance responsible for the ORPP.

As I have said before, our plan would provide a predictable stream of income, indexed to inflation and paid for life in retirement. It would be mandatory for the more than three million Ontarians without a workplace pension plan and would require fair and equal contributions from employers and employees.

The ORPP would be publicly administered at arm's length from the government, with implementation led by the former CEO of OMERS, Michael Nobrega.

We will be consulting with pension experts, provinces, businesses and labour in order to ensure that every

perspective is heard as we build the framework for a made-in-Ontario pension solution.

Mr. Speaker, we understand that our province's success depends on the success of all Ontarians. We know that when people have the opportunity to achieve their full potential, when we promote a fair society, that together we will contribute to the prosperity of the province. That's why our plan includes measures to build opportunities and a fairer society.

We are continuing to reform the social assistance system to improve income supports and reduce barriers to entering the workforce. We are proposing legislation to index the minimum wage to inflation, to help ensure that workers receive a decent wage. This is after having raised it to \$11 an hour as of June 1, 2014.

We are also proposing to remove the debt retirement charge cost from residential users' electricity bills after December 1, 2015. This would save a typical residential ratepayer about \$70 per year.

Our plan includes enhancing supports for adults with developmental disabilities and front-line workers in the community services sector. Our plan also includes providing support for wage increases for personal support workers in the publicly funded home and community care sector as well as front-line child care workers. And our plan includes increasing the Ontario Child Benefit by proposing to index it to inflation, to help children reach their full potential. These measures would help build more opportunities for Ontarians and promote a fairer province for all.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to eliminating the deficit by 2017-18. Our budget lays out the path to balance by responsibly managing spending and investing strategically in new growth. The new President of the Treasury Board and Deputy Premier, Deb Matthews, will champion transparency, efficiency and accountability across government to help us move toward pre-recession debt-to-GDP levels. Our plan includes measures to build towards fiscal balance, such as extracting more value from the province's assets, with the help of an advisory council led by retiring group president and CEO of TD Bank Group, Ed Clark.

We lead the leanest program-spending government in the country, and our efforts have resulted in lower-than-forecast program expenses in each of the last five years.

Our plan includes strategically investing in people, infrastructure and business partnerships to create growth today and tomorrow.

We are proposing to increase personal income tax for the highest 2% of tax filers in Ontario, with 98% of tax filers seeing no changes, as well as phasing in an increase of four cents per litre to the tax rate on aviation fuel over four years.

As part of our commitment to make every dollar count, we are now acting on more than 80% of the recommendations in the Drummond report. We continue to take strong but fair action to manage public sector compensation and benefits costs.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario is a net financial contributor to Confederation, and Ontarians deserve fair fiscal treat-

ment from the federal government. But in 2014-15, Ontario will experience a year-over-year decline of \$641 million in entitlements for major transfers. Independent experts and even Canada's Parliamentary Budget Officer have confirmed that, as a result of federal decisions, Ontario is the only province—the only province—to face a year-over-year decline in its major transfers in the last five years. According to a 2013 report by the Mowat Centre, the people of Ontario contributed \$11 billion more to the federal government than they received in return in 2009-10; that is the year with the latest available data. This represents about \$850 per Ontarian. That's why we will continue to insist on fair fiscal transfers from the federal government and seek federal partnerships on matters of national and provincial interest.

Our plan takes actions that are in the interests of both Ontario and Canada. This includes unlocking the resource potential in the Ring of Fire, enhancing and securing the retirement savings of Ontarians, and building the roads and public transit systems that our economy needs to continue growing. We know that building a prosperous province requires partnership among all orders of government. This is demonstrated each time we work with other governments to create jobs and make businesses more competitive. A good example of this is our efforts to move towards a co-operative capital markets regulatory system. That's why we're continuing to call on the federal government to help build a stronger Ontario and a stronger Canada.

We know that when we work together as one Ontario, when we support people in every region of the province, we will have a brighter, stronger future. The 2014 budget is our plan to build on people's talents and skills, to build modern infrastructure and transportation networks and to support a dynamic business environment. It's a plan to help families build a more secure retirement, to build a more fair society, and to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18 in a responsible way.

I urge all members of this House to support our plan so we can get to work together to build a stronger Ontario and a stronger Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments? No questions and comments?

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Okay, further debate, then.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Before I begin, Mr. Speaker, I think we have unanimous consent to have our lead stood down today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from York-Simcoe has asked that their lead be stood down. Agreed? Agreed.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I would also like to indicate at this time that I will be sharing my time with the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

I have the opportunity today to speak about the budget for a few minutes. Given its length and complexity and, quite frankly, the various parts to it, I felt that I would just pick out a few key things that I think people should

have some understanding of, if they have nothing more at the end of this than understanding its complexity and at the same time understanding how much impact it can have on the lives of all Ontarians.

The first thing I want to talk about is actually the manner in which the announcements come out in the budget, where it appears that there is money coming into the public from the government in great quantities, covering a great many possible activities of the government. Let me just tell you that, actually, in many cases, it's more like a planning document, because it is stretched over 10 years. I'll give you some examples of the announcements where the amount is given and then it's over a 10-year period.

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The first one, and the one that probably matters most to the constituents of my riding, is the question of transportation. The Premier, having been a Minister of Transportation at one time, carries with her that experience to know just how important it is to look at ways by which we can get into the 21st century on transportation. The amount that's attached to transportation is \$29 billion, but it's over 10 years. You can't leave the \$29 billion there without adding that it's over 10 years, because that gives you an entirely different flavour of the speed at which changes are going to actually come about. In the same way, there is \$700 million allocated for hospitals over a 10-year period. A third example is \$11 billion for capital expenditures in schools—again, a 10-year period. I think that, from that, you get a sense that while the government can make an announcement today and indicate its commitment to a sum of money, obviously a lot can happen in 10 years. There will be 10 more budgets, as well.

The budget provides for \$5.7 billion to cover new programs. Some of these, when you look at them, are certainly things we would all agree would be nice to have. But remember that the \$5.7 billion is actually money that goes to the debt, because there isn't revenue to match these kinds of commitments. What we're looking at is a list of things that the government would like to do, and in this case, it's a pretty hefty sum: \$5.7 billion.

I want to talk about individual items and what kind of impact they have. One of the things that is in this budget is \$810 million for community and developmental services. This one is over three years, which obviously isn't quite the same as the 10-year period of some of the others. But the problem with this money is the fact that, for the last couple of years, there has been a select committee that has done a great deal of work and has heard from many experts and families and parts of the community that are impacted and provide service to the developmental community. From the work that has been done, there is a report to be released by the select committee that would provide the government with a guideline with recommendations that would make it clear how the \$810 million should be spent. The concern on this side of the House is that, up to this point, there has been no indication that that document is going to be released

and that it's going to do what it should do, which is serve as the basis for the next three years, and the kinds of funding allocations of the \$810 million.

You can see here that while there's lots of money, apparently, at the same time, there are a certain number of caveats. How long is this money spread over—10 years or less? But at the same time, how is it actually going to be divided? How is it actually going to be spent in the community? Is it going to have the kind of transparency and the benefits that should come from these investments? Finally, in terms of the spending of money, is the fact that we have to be realistic. This is money that isn't covered by revenue. It's money that is going to contribute to the ever-increasing size of the debt, which also means that it increases the size of the service charges to carry this debt. As we all know, that happens to represent an amount equal to a third ministry—after health and education comes servicing the debt. So when we look at these programs, there are some things that we need to keep in mind that make them a little less clear and transparent in terms of how they'll be spent and how they'll be best used.

Another key part of the budget is the interest that this government has shown in the last year or so in the issues around retirement. We know that most people have a Canada pension, but an at-work pension is something shared by only about 30% of the population.

Just over a year ago, I introduced the pooled registered pension plan as my private member's bill, and I was very pleased that it appeared in the budget of 2013 of this government. I know that some work has been done in terms of consultation and how it might appear and how it might work to the benefit of Ontarians. I obviously don't have time to devote to just this particular aspect, but I would say to people that it is an important tool.

Some of the critics talk about it as if it were to replace other opportunities—not at all. We know that people have difficulty filling the amount allowed for their RRSPs, but that's no reason to suggest that we shouldn't have a pooled registered pension plan in this province. I certainly look forward to the government making that option available to people, because one of the things we see today is the fact that people move from one job to another—whether voluntarily or otherwise—and they need to have a pool of money that has their name on it. That's what a pooled registered pension does. It means that you can take it from one employer, and you can take it from one province, when that province has that companion piece of legislation.

One of the things that it does is it obviously gives people the opportunity to look at how they can put money aside, how they can grow their own savings. But the government has also, in this budget and through other means, made it clear that they want to have an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. I think that many people see this as something that really sounds too good to be true. You always have to be careful when something sounds too good to be true because, in fact, it is.

One issue that comes to mind is that people don't appreciate the time frame. The government has indicated

that they wouldn't begin this until 2017, and 2017, then, would be the beginning of the accumulation of money to be able to be provided down the road at some time. So we're going to have to pay particular attention to this initiative to make sure that it is doing what people think it will do and that it will, in fact, be of benefit.

In the meantime, you're going to feel the money going out of your pocket, because for \$90,000 of income, you would be paying 1.9% out of your pocket and 1.9% out of your employer's pocket. Certainly businesses see this as a tax on business, on the economy, and, I think with justification, are either very much opposed to it or skeptical at best.

I want to just end my remarks with a couple of quotes from an article in the Financial Post of yesterday by Jack Mintz. In this, he has provided a comparison between this government and the Bob Rae government in the early 1990s, but he also ends up looking at some of the problems that Ontario has.

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He demonstrates that Quebec requires a one-time cut of \$1.4 billion to eventually bring its debt burden down to 18% of GDP—Ontario's, by the way, is about 40% of GDP. For Ontario, it needs a one-time \$9.3-billion cut to spending, and that would then bring it down. It gives you some idea of what we are in for in the future in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm pleased to recognize the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: Taking off from my esteemed colleague, Lady Munro, I want to express again that, for me, reading the budget was a bit like Groundhog Day. It wasn't like my esteemed weather prognosticator, Warton Willie, who is actually always on the game and always comes up with positive light—

Interjection.

Mr. Bill Walker: Exactly. But it is the movie that we're talking about, where you see the same old same old. When I refer to that, Mr. Speaker, what I'm talking about is a government that overspends, lives beyond their means and is borrowing against our kids' and our grand-kids' future.

A number of my colleagues, I believe, will bring up a lot of those pertinent points, so I'm going to talk a little bit more about the specific impact, or lack of impact, that I believe this budget will have for the benefit of the people who I represent in Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

I've spoken to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, and I'm hopeful that he will actually listen and look at this, as he has said to me that he would sit with me.

At Georgian College in Owen Sound, we have the ability to bring emergency duties training facilities and programs there. This will allow us to maintain our status as the centre of excellence for the marine industry in central Canada—in Ontario, specifically. There are two other locations, on the east coast and the west coast, but my fear is that if we do not maintain this in Ontario, all of those jobs are going to head to the west coast and the

east coast. If those start to go, everything from the marine industry—what would stop the rest of that whole industry? It's a \$9-billion industry.

We're on the Great Lakes. Specifically, Owen Sound is right on the Great Lakes and has a proud history—our whole area does—of marine heritage, and I believe we need to maintain that. There's no mention of it in the budget, but I'm hopeful that the minister will be listening, even though he's not in the House today. I will follow up with him.

The government, I'm hopeful—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I just want to remind the member: It's not appropriate to mention the absence of another member.

Mr. Bill Walker: My apologies. It wasn't to do that, Mr. Speaker; it was more meaning that I will speak with him and follow up directly, as he has asked me to do.

What I'm asking him is to find \$2 million out of their \$130-billion infrastructure plan, to ensure that we maintain a marine centre of excellence in Ontario for this great industry.

Similarly, the Markdale hospital—I've spoken ad nauseam in here, and I'm hopeful. The Minister of Health agreed the other day—and again, I will follow up with him every time I get a chance. We have a 50-year-old hospital that is in deplorable shape, and 12 years ago the government of the day—the Liberals—challenged Markdale and the surrounding community to raise \$12 million. They've done that; it's now \$13.2 million, because it has been sitting in the bank collecting interest, but it's not providing service and programs to the great people there. I'm hopeful, again, with all due sincerity, that the minister will find a way in the budget to do that.

This is about trust. They came to the community and said, "If you do this, we will build you a new hospital." They put up the sign nine years ago, acknowledging that they were committed to it and that they would build a new hospital, and today, most importantly, the people are not getting the health care that they deserve from a new state-of-the-art facility that was promised.

It's back to trust, and I have big, big concerns. I believe my colleague Julia Munro mentioned that there's \$700 million in the budget allotted for hospitals—but again, no Markdale. This is 12 years that the people there have been waiting. I think their patience is drawing—

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Shameful.

Mr. Bill Walker: It's very shameful, to be absolutely honest. I've been pushing since I got here, my predecessor pushed before that, and I think it's time that the ministers step up to the table and find a way to write the cheque and get this going.

It will be great for health care, but it will also provide employment in a rural area like ours. It will be a huge catalyst. It will look good for the Liberals to actually not only build a hospital and provide that care—but for them, their integrity is on the line. It's turning around and actually doing the right thing, committing and doing the honourable thing. As my former colleague from Northumberland—Quinte West often said in this House, "Do the honourable thing, Minister."

Similarly, John Diefenbaker Secondary School in Hanover is prohibitive to repair. They know that. The government knows that. They have made overtures that it's definitely needed. It's on the list, but again, we looked through the budget yesterday, reading it, and no new disclosure in regard to JDSS. Their hope is that they would be replacing that with a regional JK-to-12 by 2016. They need that money now if we're even going to get close to that deadline. As I referenced in my earlier remarks, it prohibits repair. So they're between a rock and a hard place. It's crumbling around them. They can't repair it. They need to build new, but you don't just do these things overnight. So the government, I hope, will step up and truly do that. The government often says, "We have made our schools the best in the world." Well, this is not a shining example. In fact, it's again an example of them saying one thing and doing the opposite, and playing politics at election time.

In my riding, 18 out of 53 schools within the Bluewater District School Board may be closed in the next decade. This is just one that needs to be done today. We want the government to really stand behind its laurels. They say they're the education government. We want them to ensure that they do that.

Mr. Speaker, it saddens me again that in the budget I saw nothing in regard to rural transportation for rural Ontario—fairness for the two million residents in rural and northern Ontario. In this House, a little while ago, I presented my first-ever private member's resolution. It received unanimous support from this House to strike an all-party committee to study the transportation needs in communities north of Toronto. It was passed actually on November 28, 2013, by all three parties, and yet again there's nothing in there.

I note that the Minister of Transportation has just walked in, at a good time. He may not have been briefed on this file yet, but I'm hopeful that he will find in his—I'm sorry, Mr. Coteau. I'm looking at you as transportation. My apologies.

Interjection.

Mr. Bill Walker: Maybe that's your next step. Maybe that step up the next time.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: He did sit there.

Mr. Bill Walker: He did sit there. That's right. Sorry; my apologies. Anyway, getting back to the topic.

We all know that transportation is an essential component to healthy communities, particularly in rural Ontario. Maybe this minister can take it to the other honourable Minister of Transportation and offer my concerns that we agreed in this House, all three parties, to strike an all-party committee, and your government has not accepted that responsibility. They've not done that in the budget.

We need to ensure that rural transportation is a big issue. It is something that the government of today needs to step up and bring something to the table.

You committed \$29 billion to improve transportation networks, but I don't see much in there for rural Ontario. I specifically don't see anything in there for Bruce—

Grey-Owen Sound. That really prohibits volunteerism. It negatively impacts seniors who can't travel to doctors' appointments, youth who can't get to jobs, and kids who want to volunteer after school with programs and explore other opportunities. Those are all things that are going to be impacted.

My colleague Julia Munro spoke about the Ontario registered retirement plan. At the door, I heard from small business, medium business, large business and employees, saying, "We just don't know where we're going to find the money to do this. You're taking 1.9% out of my paycheque. Right now, I don't have enough money to save for an RRSP or I'd already be doing it. So where are we going to find that?" You're taking that consumable ability and you're telling them what they should be doing as opposed to allowing them to have the choice.

Businesses are telling me, "Bill, I don't know where I'm going to find this. This is another payroll tax on top of tripled energy rates. I'm not certain how I'm going to survive this."

In summary, I don't see a lot in there that's going to improve the benefit, health and well-being of the people of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, whom I'm very proud and privileged to be able to represent in this House. I didn't see the signal from the government that I wanted to: that they're going to actually restrain their spending and they're going to live within their means, like all of the families that I represent have to do. You have to be able to go out and spend on the priorities, absolutely, but you cannot overspend or you're taking it from those pages in front of you, the kids and the grandchildren down the road.

Mr. Speaker, we need to see some restraint. We need to see a different approach by this government, and I will not be supporting the budget as a result of that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was very interesting to listen to the member from York-Simcoe, as well as the member from—Elgin-Middlesex—London?

Mr. Bill Walker: No, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. That's what I meant to say. Sorry about that. Both of them were very interesting.

The first one, really, her focus on transportation—I represent a riding in northeastern Ontario. When they start talking about transportation, our transportation is the train. Our transportation is the Northlander that is no longer there. Our transportation is the ONTC that has been dismantled and thrown away. How can it be that public transportation is such an important issue everywhere in this province except in northeastern Ontario, where we had a train and where they took it away? They can talk a good game about saying, "Oh, we are open. We try to reach out, and we want people of all abilities to be able to feel welcome in Ontario." Well, in the northeast, people had a fully accessible train to be able to make the ride from northeastern Ontario all the way to

Toronto every day. Now, they have a non-wheelchair-accessible bus.

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When you have a different level of ability, when you are frail, when you are elderly, taking a bus to Toronto is an impossibility. First, you can't get on, and then it is so tiring that they just can't do it anymore. I'm wondering, why is it that this budget has all this money for public transportation for everybody from the south, from the GTA, from the Golden Horseshoe, but when it comes to northeastern Ontario, they take away what we already had?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in the House to speak on Bill 14, the Building Opportunity and Securing Our Future Act. I'm especially pleased to rise and respond to the members from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, York-Simcoe and also Nickel Belt.

I want to talk specifically about some of the things that were touched on earlier when there were references to the fact that our bill does not provide the supports that Ontario families need, that were spoken about earlier. This budget bill is really, in my opinion, an important plan to move Ontario forward. It's a plan that will build on the strengths of Ontario's people. This is especially important, I think, when it comes to the needs of the people of Halton.

Some of you may not realize this, but Halton, and Milton in particular, is the fastest-growing area in the country. What that means is that the people there are really made up of tens of thousands of young families. The needs that the young families have and the challenges that they face on a daily basis are there, and this particular bill is there and does bring forward supports for these families.

Certainly, when the member earlier was talking about transportation, yes, we are moving forward in this budget, or would like to move forward, \$130 billion in infrastructure over the next 10 years. As part of that would be \$29 billion being available for various projects when it comes to transit and building bridges and roadways in the GTA and the GTHA.

For my riding, commuters travel every day into the city, and for people like me who travel and have been travelling for more than 20 years on GO Transit, I can't tell you how important these investments will be towards our future and towards creating an economy that works and ensuring that families are going to be able to sit down to dinner faster.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's my pleasure to stand and reflect on the comments shared by my colleague from York-Simcoe, as well as my neighbour from Grey-Bruce-Owen Sound, because they bring to light some very serious problems that this budget presents across Ontario.

First things first, I can't help but repeat what the member from Grey-Bruce-Owen Sound said: We have

to get back to ensuring people trust the government in Ontario, because, quite frankly, although the Liberal government today may think they have a very clear mandate, I would suggest to you that they worry about what's going to be coming down the pipeline over the next four years. One example that was drawn to light today by the member from Grey–Bruce–Owen Sound was the hospital in Markdale. Those people fundraised. They worked hard and they worked determinedly to make sure that they had a hospital facility in their hometown that would serve the community. But they've been led down the garden path, so to speak; and it makes me think back to the promises that were made in August 2011 to the Wingham community and the Kincardine community—promises made, promises broken. I think that pretty much sums up where we're going to be heading with this particular budget, as well.

Both the member from York–Simcoe, as well as the member from Grey–Bruce–Owen Sound—there, I got it—touched on the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. I, too, heard this over and over again during the campaign from small business. For so many, this is going to be like another jobs tax. When jobs are hard to be found throughout rural Ontario, and I would dare say across all of Ontario, we need to be mindful of how we can be propping up small business as opposed to burdening them with more tax to cover the failed policies of this Liberal government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Hon. Michael Coteau: It's an honour today to speak on this important bill. I want to talk about what was happening during the election, because I think the election we just went through is really a reflection of the ideas that we brought forward, and the people of Ontario, I think, were very clear that they want to move forward on a very progressive agenda that's reflective of this budget.

I want to talk in particular about the pension plan, because I had the opportunity to knock on a lot of doors. In fact, I spoke to local media about this issue. When I got to doors, I spoke to a lot of people who were worried about the future. They were worrying about their ability to retire with some affordability. I have people who come into my constituency office, and they lay down their bills, and they lay down the income that they're receiving, and sometimes they don't match up. I think that we need to make sure that people, after they have worked so many years, working hard—that they could actually retire with some dignity. I think a pension plan will allow people to do that.

I know that people talk about the 1.9%, but it is split between the employer and the employee. It is optional. If folks do have a pension, they can opt out. So there is that option.

I think that ensuring that you have a little bit of extra income—because we know that the Canada Pension Plan right now is not working the way in which it's supposed to work. We asked the Prime Minister specifically to fix it. I know it wasn't only Ontario. There were many provin-

inces that came together to ask the Prime Minister to make those changes, and the Prime Minister did not make those changes.

So Ontario will be bold, Ontario will be different and it will chart its own course. That course will allow people to better prepare for the future, and I think that all members in this Legislature should be standing behind this budget, particularly because of this issue.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound has two minutes.

Mr. Bill Walker: It's certainly a pleasure, on behalf of my colleague, the member for York–Simcoe, who I believe laid out, really, the challenges of this budget. She talked about the pension plan that's going to be a real detriment to a lot of people, not just the employees, but the employers across our great province. She talked about their overspending ways in this budget, and, again, in my two and a half years—she's been here much longer to be able to see that this track record is the same. It's tax and spend and overspend and continually going back to the people.

What we didn't really get into, but I think it's ominous and it is going to happen, is that this government continues to overspend and promise everything to everybody, but they're also promising to balance the budget by 2017. I'm not certain how you can continually overspend and balance the budget in two and a half to three years. So they're going to have to step up in front of the people at some point and again admit to them that, "Well, we made another mistake." This is becoming a bit of a trend.

I can't stand here and not bring it up, because the people of my great riding brought it to up me throughout the election campaign, the wasted money from the gas plants. They said it would be \$40 million it was going to cost. It became \$1.2 billion, Mr. Speaker. It was a concern from them of \$1.2 billion that's not going to front-line health care. It's not going to education. It's not going to the special-needs folks. It's not going to people who need housing.

That was just one example of waste. We have eHealth, we have Ornge helicopters, which were a fiasco in this government, and now, I believe, this registered pension plan could be the next fiasco. I'm not even going to talk about MaRS, which we had to talk about during the election campaign, which, again, could be \$1 billion, and we're not certain where they're going to find money to pay for that.

What we can't forget is that every time we have one of these scandals, Mr. Speaker, that's money that's not going to the great people of Ontario who are the most needy, those who are on the front lines who need that. We don't want to see more administration and bureaucracy. We want to see money going to the front line. We want to see some restraint from this government, and it's not too late for them now to step up and say, "We're going to actually balance the budget today."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: For those of you who were here earlier today, I did talk at length about the budget motion, and I'm going to continue on some of those themes today.

I do want to say first, though, that I will be sharing some of my time with the member from Algoma-Manitoulin. He wants to make some, I think, very important points about how this budget will affect the north.

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I also wanted to start off my comments by thanking the Minister of Finance and his staff for organizing a review of this bill, schedule by schedule. These are incredibly informative sessions, I think, for critics, and I was incredibly impressed by the people who came to the information sessions. Clearly these are public servants who care deeply about this province. They know their files incredibly well, and I benefited from the exchange.

That said, there are some concerns outstanding, and these are themes that I think you will have heard through question period and through some of the other members. We are still very concerned about the affordability issues that affect Ontarians, which this budget does not address, basic issues of fairness; the proposed pension plan—that was a major part, I think, of some of the language around the election—and the proposal to sell off public assets; and ultimately, job creation—for this province to have a strong job creation strategy, which is not addressed in this budget. In fact, this government has been continuing on the same path since almost 2007, where we've actually seen a reduction in job creation across the province. Despite what the Minister of Economic Development says each and every day, the 34,000 job losses that were cited just this week are indicative of a growing trend around jobs in the province of Ontario, of more precarious, part-time or contract work. Then, when you factor in the youth unemployment rate in the province of Ontario, it is indeed dire. So this budget does not address that.

I think that it's really important to address a key piece, which I touched on this morning. On page 244 of this budget, there is very clearly outlined a 6% reduction in program spending for public services. There is an exemption for health care and education for now. I think it's important to take note of the fact that when Mike Harris proposed a 5% cut to program spending in 1995, he was vilified. There were protests on the front lawn. There were petitions all through this House. I remember that because I was actually spending a little bit of time here somewhere in the gallery, and I had worked just across the street at the old Toronto Board of Education, prior to the amalgamation of the school boards. I remember that time as a time of chaos, a time of uncertainty where people actually didn't know how strongly they felt about public services until those public services were taken away.

I actually sometimes, occasionally, give credit to Mr. Harris for getting me so angry about the cuts to ESL and to adult education that it actually got me off the couch

and got me involved in a number of groups, like People for Education and the Metro Parent Network. I remember that time so clearly because people came together and they fought back against this government.

And so, when people realize that after this year 1 of this budget, there is going to be a serious wake-up call for the people of this province—because a 6% cut to program spending is significant; it's significant on a number of levels, not just because it amounts to almost \$3 billion, but also because spending is being flat-lined. For instance, if you're a hospital administrator and you're looking at a flat-line budget for the third year in a row, that is essentially a cut to hospital services because hospitals have made very good cases for increased costs, or at least costs that warrant additional funding and needs.

There will be a delayed response; this is my prediction. But you don't have to take my word for it, because there are a number of media journalists who have finally caught up to the theme that we were talking about prior to the election. Adam Radwanski, July 4: "Keep an Eye on the Next Liberal Budget, Not Just This One"—because the context is important here for the province of Ontario. He says that there are "very few details as to how it's supposed to work, a flat-lining of provincial expenditures starting in 2015-16 and aimed at returning to balance by 2017-18." We can see no clear direction on how this government is actually going to get to that point.

"With the Liberals continuing to insist both publicly and privately that they remain committed to that target, there has been much speculation that they're secretly plotting something along the lines of the 100,000 public-sector job cuts that they railed against when Tim Hudak's Progressive Conservatives proposed it" in the last election. "But that probably gives the government too much credit for forethought." I concur with this opinion entirely.

He goes on to say, "No doubt, Ms. Wynne appears poised to do battle with many of the same unions that helped her win back office." That's a large part of what the President of the Treasury Board will be dealing with.

That brings me back to the point of September 2012 in this House, when this government undermined collective bargaining rights and went to the wall against the very people that they said that they supported. That was through Bill 115. I'm incredibly connected to that time in history because it's one of the reasons that I ended up where I ended up in this House.

I think that that context is actually really important. It's that there is a disconnect between what is contained within this budget and what you hear outside of this House and what you heard in that election. It is our job to call you on it. It's an accountability measure. As the finance critic and the critic for the Treasury Board, I think it's important for us to make sure that when you follow the numbers you follow the real priorities of a government. We're going to continue to do that as time marches on.

Also, Bloomberg News reported on June 3, during the election campaign, which is surprising: "Yet Wynne's

own budget documents shows this year's spending surge will be followed by the deepest freeze in two decades.

"After boosting program spending by \$3 billion" in this fiscal year, "the Liberal Party leader plans to hold the line the next three years in a bid to eliminate the deficit. Given population growth, a 2017 Liberal government would drop spending by the most per person since former Premier Mike Harris won election on deficit elimination in 1995."

So we are going into, after this little grace period that we apparently will be experiencing—although I must point out that there are a number of people who are not experiencing that grace period in the province of Ontario—we are certainly going to be facing some serious cuts in program spending. We just need to know where those are. Our job is to mitigate the damage that we see that those cuts could have. But we need to explore where those cuts are going to be happening.

I think it's important to say also that in the Legislature the Liberal government loves to cast scorn on the Harris government. We just have to pull Hansard. It's not very difficult. They love to place scorn on the Harris government that preceded them over 11 years ago. We should learn from history. We should learn what has worked in the past and what has not worked. This is why we have such serious concerns about the proposed sale of public assets.

One only has to explore the fire sale of the 407 for instance; the move towards privatization of the energy sector—high hydro rates because there was a lack of investment in electricity infrastructure; hospital wait times, which are much worse today; and then schools, of course. There was a time in this province of Ontario when education was absolutely thrown into a state of chaos. We have to ensure, even post-Bill 115—there was a year of transition which actually was very harmful for students in our public education system. We must protect them from that chaos again. It is so very important.

At the time, I was president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. It takes a long time for a system to recover from that experience. It took a long time when Mr. Harris, the Premier at the time, went down Bill 160. That was one of those bills that had a lasting effect on public education. It takes us a long time. There's value to actually being focused on preventing that from happening again. As I mentioned, the most recent example is Bill 115.

The proposed sale of public assets—we keep raising it and we're going to keep raising it, actually, because of the serious concern. We see this government using the proposed sale of these assets as a quick fix. In the debriefing that I quite enjoyed, as I mentioned—it's under schedule 32 of this budget. The objectives—this is the Trillium Trust Act, 2014. The objective is to establish the Trillium Trust in the public accounts, which will hold the proceeds of asset sales and be used to fund new, tangible capital assets. This allows the Treasury Board to designate any ministry or public entity asset as a qualifying asset for disposal. When a public entity disposes of

a qualifying asset, like the LCBO or OPG, as determined by the Treasury Board—this is giving a whole new level of power to the Treasury Board—the public entity shall pay into the Consolidated Revenue Fund the amount that is required to be credited to the Trillium Trust.

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That money in the Trillium Trust is to be used "to fund, directly or indirectly, costs incurred in connection with constructing or acquiring infrastructure or"—this is the interesting part—"other tangible capital assets." The proposal that we're going to be selling off public assets and then filtering that money in through the public accounts, through the Trillium Trust Act, to move forward perhaps with the purchase of more public assets does not make any sense. It seems to me to be an exercise in accounting, and this is something we're going to be following very carefully.

There are other people in this province, though, who share our sincere concern around the proposed sale of public assets. Smokey Thomas wrote an open letter to the Premier this week, on July 14. I would say for the record that Smokey Thomas has been one of those labour leaders, I think, who has been very clear all along that this remained a concern. He saw it in the budget. He communicated it to his members, and they communicated their concern to us as well.

In this open letter, he referred to OPSEU's proposed five-point plan to protect public services. This is an open letter to the Premier, in partnership—which we hear a lot about in this House.

He says, "If adopted, our plan to protect public services would put a stop to asset giveaways, stanch the resultant fiscal bleeding and, better still, ensure quality public services for the citizens of Ontario who actually underwrite them."

He's recognizing that we all have a vested interest in these public assets.

"Among the key elements to our plan: public consultation and clear evidence that privatization will lead to improved services"—that's a challenge for us going forward. If we privatize, move in that direction, will the people of this province get value for that?

He goes on to say, "Privatization must be proceeded by a full and open review by an independent body, including a cost-benefit analysis; public sector workers and other interested parties must have standing in the review process"—essentially, this is asking for a seat at the table or asking to have the ability to weigh in on a privatization agenda.

I would say that OPSEU has been very strong on the privatization of health care services, which also should be called into question as a direction that the Ministry of Health is moving toward.

He goes on to say, "The process, studies and findings must be tabled with the Legislature and, finally, if privatization is recommended, employees must maintain their existing rights, benefits and entitlements."

"For close to 20 years Ontario's efforts at privatizing public assets have proven to be a massive error in public

policy.” We share these concerns. The examples, of course, are quite numerous. “By now the public is familiar with the litany of failures: ORNGE, Walkerton, Highway 407, Teranet, LCBO agency stores, meat inspection, jail privatization. The list goes on.”

As Mr. Clark is charged with this review, this special committee to review the sale of public assets, the questions that we are going to be asking: What is the objective for the government to go in this direction? Is it for short-term cash? Is it for long-term cash? Is it to secure a reliable revenue stream? Will you oppose social policy levers?

This is an issue that continually rises up with the proposed LCBO sale. If the government is getting out of the business of alcohol distribution, for instance—even Mike Harris didn’t want to do this—if that is the proposal, then what social policy levers are going to be put in place to ensure that the public safety is ensured? We don’t do it for private companies. We don’t do it for large department stores or Walmart. Where is that line going to be drawn? If that is the proposal, and it seems that it is, because the government has already banked on \$3.15 billion as a revenue stream from the sale of public assets—and this is separate, but it also includes the GM shares. That’s fine. Get rid of the GM shares. That got thrown into the conversation this morning, and really, it’s not an issue. What is at issue for us, of course, is the sale of OPG and Hydro One and the LCBO stores.

We are going to continue to raise questions with regard to this direction. We see it, quite honestly, as our responsibility, and if the government does move it forward, I think the principles that have been laid out by OPSEU would be a good template to ensure that the public interest is indeed protected and that taxpayers and citizens of this province know what the true intentions of the government are so that there really are proposed savings, perhaps, but definitely accountability.

So we have public pension plan concerns. These are outstanding. Just to review a little bit: The questions that we are going to be asking about the public pension plan which have not come to the fore thus far—you have mentioned there’s an opt-in component. This has not actually been fully worked out, the opt-out. If you have a small business, for instance, with maybe 10 to 12 employees and they currently have a small pension plan where they’re contributing between 1% and 2%, matched by the employer, if the Ontario public pension plan comes into effect by 2017 or by 2018, if that actually happens, what is the unintended consequence, perhaps, of that public pension plan coming into play when there’s already one for a small employer? Will that employer abandon that? Will they think it complementary? Where is the risk? What are unintended consequences of it? Quite honestly, there is a lot of confusion out there about this proposed public pension plan.

A lady at the door said to me, “You know, I’m 60. I need a pension.” She thinks that by 2017, all of a sudden, she’s going to have some ability to have some financial security. I guess the question that I would be asking is, if

you are 45 or 50 years old in the province of Ontario and you make about \$45,000—let’s be honest—Mr. And Mrs. Front Porch, for instance, what kind of payment will they receive? When will they receive it? Those details, as was determined when we were viewing this through the schedule of this budget—there are no details there really. There is this idea and there is this promise.

We’ve seen a lot of promises of late from this government. In fact, the promises keep happening, which is really surprising to me. The election is over. There’s no need to continue to go out there and promise, promise, promise when we know that there isn’t money to fulfill those promises. Just yesterday, the Premier did an interview with CBC KW, saying, “You know what? High-speed rail: It’s going to happen.” There is no money for high-speed rail. I would love to see it happen. I would love to see real two-way, all-day GO service. I would love to be able to get on a train from Kitchener-Waterloo and go to Toronto in good time, not two hours and 15 minutes, not constantly delayed, not only two trains that leave. I know that the 10,000 people who commute from Toronto to Waterloo region would love to get on a train and come in to the region, into this new transit hub that we’re building, which is directly related and connected to the promise of an infrastructure web, if you will. Those projects are just waiting to happen, and yet the former minister talked about bullet trains and now we’re talking about high-speed rail when we can’t see the report and we can’t see the study and there’s no environmental assessment. From 2009, we can’t even get two-way, all day GO service.

So there is a disconnect between what is contained in this budget and what the perceived expectations are out in the province of Ontario. I have to tell you, there are going to be a lot of disappointed people. More importantly, there are going to be a lot of public services that are not going to be offered. Our concern is that we’ll hurt people—in our minds, sometimes the most vulnerable people in the province of Ontario.

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Our concern around a public pension plan has been articulated several times. The sale of public assets is going to be a continued theme going forward. I think actually just on job creation—I was the former critic for economic development. We actually have evidence—we have best practices which are very effective at creating jobs. They are primarily supportive of small and medium-sized enterprises. They are the job creators in the province. They are the job creators in this nation. When you pair targeted tax credits with them, it’s a very accountable way to support those businesses for innovation, research and capital investment.

We saw those Heinz jobs leave Ontario on the promise of a job creator tax credit in Ohio. Heinz received \$530,000 for bringing 250 jobs to Ohio. So we know that it works in other jurisdictions. There is genuinely just a reluctance to partner in this, even though—and this is going to be my constant theme of course—in the throne speech, on page 4, it says that we will choose “evidence

before ideology,” and we will choose “partnership over partisanship.”

There are better ideas out there other than corporate tax giveaways. Where that money is going right now is into reserves. It is not going back out into the broader economy. It is not being used to hire youth into new job experiences. We did fight for the youth jobs strategy that was contained in the budget, but there’s so much more that we can do to support small and medium-sized enterprises in the hiring of youth in the province of Ontario. We just have to get them in the door. We just have to ensure that those conditions are such that employers recognize that we are willing to support and reward, and not penalize, for hiring those youth.

One example, though: In this budget, there is what I can only describe as a nonsensical issue. It’s the aviation tax. It’s a \$25-million annual tax that you will be collecting. In Waterloo region, we have this new, up-and-coming airport. We are trying to draw people into the region. We are trying to promote the airport to additional destinations. This is an up-and-coming industry. It is already so expensive to travel in the province of Ontario. Actually, I have paid almost \$600 to go to Ottawa and I’m paying \$600 to go to Scotland in a couple of weeks. There’s no comparison. It’s a competitive disadvantage to put an additional tax on an up-and-coming industry which has a direct effect on businesses and business development in the province of Ontario. At the very least, we should put a clause in this schedule to review it. Why not review it for efficacy, for effectiveness, if it is in fact a policy that will negatively impact job creation? We can ill afford additional job losses in the province of Ontario.

These are some of the ideas that we will be bringing to the table as this bill moves into finance committee. There certainly is a bit of revisionism that has happened, some backpedalling already on this budget, and it’s kind of understandable why that’s happening, because the election is, after all, over.

It’s interesting to see how the media is now looking at this budget with a new lens. The *Globe*, of course, describes this as “a plan for more government and an attempt to grow a sluggish economy through new spending. Left-wing pundits cheered”—this is the progressive budget stuff—“Right-leaning pundits winced. Conclusions have differed, but almost everyone has told the same story.

“The thing is, the actual budget doesn’t tell that story. At all.

“The actual budget, the Liberal government’s multi-year spending plan, is an austerity budget. Or at least that’s what’s promised.”

That’s from the *Globe*, just this week.

The *National Post*, on the budget—it was described this way:

“Among the things that haven’t changed since this budget was first introduced in May are the plain facts it forecasts a three-year clampdown on spending in almost every ministry on the order of 6% annually, which in real terms is almost certainly closer to 10%, beginning next year.

“At the very least, this is entirely not in keeping with the rhetoric Ms. Wynne has employed for months....”

The 6% cut to program spending is something that is going to definitely change the tenor and tone of this House. I know that we’ve only been sitting now for three weeks, and already there is definitely an imbalance in this House, because now it’s a majority.

Quite honestly, I really liked the minority. I think that minority governments actually can work for the people of this province. I thought that if we had perhaps started off on the right foot, it might have worked better.

There was this feeling after the 2011 election, when this House resumed, that this was a major minority, or it was a minor majority. There was this feeling because there was only a one-seat difference from a majority, and it took some time for the minority Legislature to fall into a more productive state, I thought.

I do think that minority governments can work, and I did think that this Legislature needed to be reset. That’s some of the language that I was using. I thought that if we came back, there would be a genuine recognition that the economy should take precedence.

We need to get people back to work. We need to acknowledge that the path that we are on is not sustainable and that cutting programs and hurting the most vulnerable—that is not the kind of province that we want to build up. I don’t think that any party has the corner on wanting the best for the province of Ontario. I do think that we can agree that we want to get there in different ways.

This budget, for us, will trigger a fire sale of valuable public assets. We have no doubt that this is going to happen. I’ve explained at length how we hope to mitigate some of the damages. Selling off assets that generate revenue, like the LCBO, just does not make sense. The province needs those revenue streams right now. You do not heat the house by burning the furniture. People understand this, and they understood it at the door.

I think that it’s so very interesting that we all had such different responses at the door, and we were in the same province.

For me, I recognize that fear was one of those dominant emotions at the doorstep. I think that fear can be a very powerful emotion.

I want to say once again that the interim leader has openly said that the threat of 100,000 cuts definitely derailed the election in a very significant way. I don’t think that it was the expectation, perhaps, that that would happen, and I also have to say that I know that some of the members in the PC caucus were caught off guard.

The framework, the context and the timing of this budget, I think, are historically very important. This was confirmed in an article by Mr. Jack Mintz in the *National Post*. He says that with Wynne, it’s déjà vu, only worse. The net debt-to-GDP will be two and a half times higher than it was in 1991-92.

I think it’s important to look at the numbers. In 1991-92, under that budget, there was an increase in spending of 12.7%. In this budget, it’s 2.7%. The deficit, which

includes both program-operational deficit and capital spending funded by debt, was \$11 billion in 1991-92. In 2014-15, it is \$20 billion.

The provincial net debt as a share of the GDP in 1991 was 17.1%. In 2014-15, it is 40.3%. The interest expense as a share of total expenditures in 1991-92 was 8.1% and this year it's 8.4%, so there has been no improvement on that whatsoever.

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What does this all mean? This means that, going forward, in order for us to reduce our operational deficit, you're either going to have to raise taxes or you're going to have to cut. Those are the two choices. We should be investing some serious energy in job creation because that is also another significant revenue stream, but there is, I think, on the job creation file, almost an unwillingness to acknowledge that the job creation strategies that have been in play have not worked.

I'd like to quote Michael Warren from the Toronto Star, July 8: "Governments that try to buy jobs by luring new business investments have at best a checkered record. It's hard enough for experienced venture capital firms to pick more winners than losers.... Seeking federal fairness should be a centrepiece...."

This is something that I think we can work with. We can work with you on trying to fight to get some fairness on the federal piece, but I also think it's important to acknowledge that this is a relatively new argument that the Liberals have put into place. It's an evolving argument, and we see the Liberal government deferring more and more and more to the feds on housing, on infrastructure funding, on post-secondary. These are some basic provincial responsibilities, financial responsibilities, that the provincial government has.

There's no denying that, moving forward, when we see the cuts to child care, for instance, you will not be able to say, "We are investing in child care," because those child care centres are at risk. They're at risk for a number of reasons, and we have tried to raise those issues with this government for quite some time. But the continuation and the need for continued investment in early learning and care is also a major economic driver. For every dollar you invest in child care, you get a \$7 return on that investment. It is, in many ways, the great equalizer for women who are entering the workforce, and we've seen case after case after case of needed licensed centres to protect children who are actually in child care centres.

On that, it's very clear that the concerns that we have with this budget are so significant that we could not support it. We do not have the confidence that this budget is what this province needs at this time in history. There are too many outstanding issues.

That said, I do believe that the role of a strong finance critic and critic for Treasury Board is to ensure that information is shared and communicated, and where there are areas where we can find consensus, where there are areas where we can find shared responsibilities, I'm

more than willing to do the hard work, especially on the job creation file.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to defer now to the member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to first thank the member from Kitchener-Waterloo, who is just falling quite well into her role as our finance critic. I believe that she has raised quite a few concerns and issues that our party has that we've heard when we're on doorsteps, particularly when it comes to this budget in regard to pensions, infrastructure, health care, accountability, insurance costs, affordability measures, job creation, privatization, asset sales—the list goes on and on and on. I'm just privileged, and again, I thank her for giving me an opportunity to follow her to speak to the second reading of Bill 14, Building Opportunity and Securing Our Future Act, the Ontario 2014 budget.

Having said that, this is the first opportunity that I have to rise in the House and acknowledge and thank the good people of Algoma-Manitoulin for providing me with the opportunity and the privilege and the honour of coming back and representing their voices here at Queen's Park.

Ça me fait un extrêmement grand plaisir de reconnaître les gens d'Algoma-Manitoulin qui m'ont donné, avec une voix unie et forte, le privilège et l'honneur de porter leurs voix une autre fois et puis qui m'ont indiqué qu'ils étaient contents et qu'ils ont vraiment eu la chance de reconnaître que leurs besoins et leurs voix étaient entendus ici à Queen's Park.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it has become more and more apparent that many Ontarians were misled into believing this was actually a progressive budget. However, upon closer examination, people, communities and organizations are feeling deceived. Yesterday, I rose in the Legislature to highlight one aspect of this budget that will absolutely devastate a community in my riding, like Wawa. A lot of my comments will be geared and directed towards the community of Wawa and the other 110 communities that are also affected by this.

Throughout a lot of the comments that have been coming out of this budget from my friends across the way, I hear words or sayings like, "building on strength," "building up Ontario" and "progressive." Even in the throne speech—I want to echo a comment that my colleague from Kitchener-Waterloo made—it says, "Your government will put evidence before ideology and choose partnership over partisanship." I look forward to seeing those words come to fruition. It's something that I strove for and it's something that I prided myself on in the last sitting of this government when we were in a minority setting. I hope that is still what is going to happen going forward.

While there might be some communities across the province of Ontario that are looking forward to the adoption of the current provincial budget, many more are not. Many communities are struggling with aspects of the

current budget such as the accelerated cuts to the OMPF funding, the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund program, the unknown aspects of the new OPP building model and questions about funding for aging infrastructure.

Wawa and 110 other communities are subject to the cut of the Power Dam Special Payment Program. The proposed clawback of this program should be alarming for many communities. Implemented in 2001, the program was put in place to replace the taxation revenues associated with hydro-electrical plants, poles and wires when these properties were deemed exempt. In the case of the municipality of Wawa, this meant that 47% of their property assessment base was declared exempt. Can you imagine the change and the magnitude happening in your community if you were put under these conditions?

The program is very small—\$18.7 million in 2014—when compared to multi-billion annual budgets, yet the impact of the clawback is large for many of the communities. Payments range from \$158 to \$2.3 million. These payments are significant contributions to the revenue base of many participating communities.

The program represents property that was previously taxable under the assessment. The right to tax the subject properties was removed in 2001. The previous property taxation model was replaced with a gross receipt model wherein payments are now submitted to the province of Ontario. The province of Ontario continues to refuse to release the amounts of these payments. Since 2001, the payments have not kept pace with either inflation or the property taxation rate in any community. This has resulted in an unfair shift to the remaining assessment base.

Payments to MPAC still reflect the calculation that uses the now-exempt assessment. Communities therefore pay MPAC for the assessment of property that is no longer assessed. The ARB cases that may have existed prior to 2001 would require taxation refunds from their remaining property assessment. The only way for participating communities to recapture the subject revenue would be through a taxation increase to the remaining assessment. Alternatively, services could also be cut to compensate for the loss of revenue.

The clawback of this program affects 110 communities across the province, many in a very significant way. There is nothing that is fair or manageable about the reduction of this program.

There's a letter that was sent by the mayor of Wawa—this is Mayor Linda Nowicki—to the Premier on July 3. I'd like to just read a little part of it:

"In the past 15 years, Wawa has had to deal with the loss of major employers including Algoma Ore and Weyerhaeuser while having to absorb the collapse of the forestry, mining and tourism industries. The loss of employment, the ability to tax power dams and far too many public sector jobs to mention have left us questioning the sustainability of the community.

years and then approximately \$548,000 for every year thereafter; all on an annual payment of" \$2.3 million. "In order to compensate for this loss, we will need to increase our municipal property tax levy by 12.6%, notwithstanding planned decreases in OMPF payments and a declining assessment base. Our community cannot afford this devastating blow."

The letter goes on to provide a quote from the former mayor, as well, Mr. Howard Whent, from Wawa. He explains, in this quote, how this cut will actually affect not only the community of Wawa but also other communities across Algoma-Manitoulin. This letter is available from one of the local media outlets up in Wawa. It says:

"This would not only impact Wawa, it would affect all 20 municipalities served by the Algoma District Services Administration Board (ambulance, child care, social housing, Ontario Works). This year (2014) Wawa will contribute \$870,879 of the" \$2.3 million "power dam compensation to the operation of this board. (Wawa will contribute an additional \$626,955 from the actual tax base). If Wawa gets less as power dam compensation, the contribution to this board will be reduced and that means that all the municipalities would have to then pay for the difference."

That's the impact of this decision, and that's the impact that this government is having on communities across Algoma-Manitoulin and across the north. Should the province proceed with this clawback, Wawa will be unable to meet financial obligations. As I said earlier, many services will need to be eliminated or reduced, or a property taxation levy increase of 12.6% will need to be implemented. Either way, it is the ratepayers who lose. Wawa has reached out to other affected communities and has approached the government to set up a meeting with these communities to discuss their concerns.

I just wanted to grab a quote from the budget. If you permit me a second to catch my thoughts here, Mr. Speaker. It says at the end of the section "Power Dam Special Payment Program" that "The province will work with municipalities on ways to implement the phase-down in a manner that is fair and manageable." I've been talking to the minister for quite some time, and I've brought this issue forward to him. I'm still waiting for someone from his ministry—which he's promised me—to approach me and to give me an idea so we can relay this information to the community of Wawa, to the mayor and the good people of Wawa, and the communities of northern Ontario. What is going to be fair and manageable? How are you going to be doing this?

How is this a progressive budget? I'd like to hear an explanation on how this is progressive and how those communities are going to be affected.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to touch on a few other things as well. As critic for northern development and mines, I have raised the lack of progress on the Ring of Fire file for a very long time and countless times. The Ring of Fire and other natural resource sector projects in Algoma-Manitoulin and across northern Ontario

represent an enormous economic opportunity in the region.

I'd like to look at the throne speech; I was very happy when I saw this, Mr. Speaker. On page 12, under "Leadership that Builds Ontario and Canada," it says, "Within the next 60 days, your government will establish a Ring of Fire development corporation and move forward in a smart, sustainable and collaborative way with First Nations, the private sector and communities to unlock the enormous mineral potential in northern Ontario. Your government commits \$1 billion for transportation infrastructure to help access the Ring of Fire."

I was very happy to see that. Then, when I looked at the Minister of Finance, he re-quoted. He said, "Mr. Speaker, we will invest \$1 billion in transportation infrastructure for the development of the Ring of Fire in northern Ontario."

But then, when I looked at the actual budget—when you look at the language that was used in here, it has not changed. It says, "The province is willing to commit up to \$1 billion towards infrastructure development, contingent on matching investment by the federal government." This is the message that we're sending to industry, not just across Canada, but globally: that we're not ready for this.

Also, when I looked at the media, one of the media outlets, it was a response from the Minister of Northern Development in regard to the 60-day period in the throne speech that I spoke about, as to when that development corporation is actually going to be established. Here's the response from the minister:

"We are not yet there in terms of determining exactly what form it will take....

"We're working on as we speak."

That is what he said.

We have to remember that the development corporation announcement was announced in 2013. In February 2014, we had the government announce that Deloitte LLP had been hired to establish the corporation. Then, we hear again that Minister Gravelle wouldn't reveal details of how the development corporation might be operating, or even what the government promise to establish the development corporation within 60 days means.

One of my questions is: Is it 60 days from the election? Is it 60 days from the throne speech? Is it 60 days from when this budget passes? When are these 60 days up? Because we need a government that actually knows what the heck they're doing, so that this sends the right message to industry, so that we can attract this investment, so that we can create the jobs we need in northern Ontario, so that we can move forward with the development of the Ring of Fire.

Projects of this size require strong action and planning from the government of Ontario, yet the current Liberal government has done nothing over the past five years to come up with a plan that will create jobs, build infrastructure and reduce the high price of electricity. I've said this before: This government is good as far as being

a government based on media releases and developing a plan to make a plan to implement a plan. That is not moving this province forward.

Northerners have seen the big announcement made by the Liberals fail to materialize. Instead of a plan that could create thousands of jobs annually, this government has sat on the sidelines, and companies and investors have walked away from Ontario, taking good-paying jobs elsewhere, out of the province and out of this country.

Unfortunately, this is nothing new. Two years ago, this same Liberal government announced that it had reached a deal with Cliffs to create jobs in the Sudbury area—actually, there was a smelter that was coming to Capreol—but last year, Cliffs halted operations in Ontario after they couldn't get the Liberals to follow through on their commitment. The reality is that this Liberal government has done nothing for northern Ontario, and the only people profiting from the Ring of Fire are the lawyers and consultants down here on Bay Street.

Liberals have put northern Ontario on the backburner for far too long. Industry is suffering, jobs are being lost, transportation services have been lost and northerners are ignored. That is what I was getting at the doors. I hear what my colleagues—my friends across the way—are saying, but it's not across the north. I hope that you take the message from northerners, particularly people across Algoma-Manitowlin in northern Ontario, and be humbled by that message, and listen to what we have to say; and share those ideas, participate in the discussions and learn some of our points that we were bringing forward. Take them in. Use them as your own. Push them forward. Listen and build on those bridges that were extended to you.

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More money from the Ring of Fire would have been a good step forward, but we northerners know that this will be another broken promise. We all know that there are more mining activities in northern Ontario than in the Ring of Fire. Yet the Liberals have yet to address other mining activities within the province.

The Liberal government has not put any timeline or guarantee for these funds. It is obvious they are not serious about northern economic development. This is not a reasonable plan. To date, despite my best efforts for a briefing, I have yet to hear or yet to be presented with some sort of structure or planning on the development corporation and what their role will actually be in developing the Ring of Fire. And it doesn't go without asking, Mr. Speaker.

Many questions remain. However, Ontarians are not at all confident that this Liberal government will even answer some of those questions or deliver on the wealth and the opportunities that we have to develop in northern Ontario, and particularly in the Ring of Fire.

There's one thing also that I'd like to touch on which I heard at every doorstep. That's affordability measures. I have not heard it from my friends across the way, and I'm sure you were knocking on Ontarians' doors and you heard the same message that I heard in regard to the cost

of hydro. You know, it has been over a month since the election day and I can tell you that I still receive daily messages from constituents who feel their issues have been ignored by this government.

Before, during and after the campaign, the concern which was raised overwhelmingly was the rising cost of hydro and the choices that people have to make at the end of the month. Whether on fixed payment or not, most were unable to pay their bills. Again and again, folks raised the issue of the delivery charges. People in northern communities are being gouged to have just the very basic in electricity. This budget does little to address the concerns of so many across this province.

I want to provide a couple of suggestions that this government can possibly take in as far as moving forward. If we're going to talk about partnerships, it means listening to new ideas instead of doing things the same way you were. New Democrats put forward some basic proposals to help tackle the rising cost of hydro. Ontarians are paying the highest electricity prices in Canada and working families are having trouble keeping up.

New Democrats propose to cut waste in Ontario's electricity system with a variety of measures. I'll share a few with you that you can possibly take in and actually implement some of those: by stopping the \$1-billion annual subsidy of electricity exports to jurisdictions like New York and Michigan; by taking Ontario hydro sales out of the hands of speculative energy traders, in a simple first step.

Capping executive pay and cutting down on waste and duplication by merging Ontario's hydro agencies would be a second cost-saving measure. That's step 1 and step 2. Let's take another step: Stopping private power giveaways and having Ontario's auditor conduct an immediate review of all private power contracts in the wake of the \$1-billion plants scandal.

These are ideas. Take them, use them, work with them and talk to us about our ideas. We have more, and we'd like to share them with you. We all know that families have been footing the bill for the sale of discounted electricity to the US as Ontario has handed out \$1 billion to private companies and Wall Street energy traders to produce excess electricity to ship to the US at a loss.

We did not just grab these ideas out of thin air. We actually listened to our constituents. We actually listened to people across this province and looked at what measures could be taken in order to reduce hydro bills. These are steps that you could use to actually reduce people's costs so that they can manage and make ends meet at the end of the month.

The Liberals have not included in this budget any measures that will make actual significant reductions in the cost of hydro for consumers. They have made no movement on the consolidation of the four hydro agencies and passing on the resultant savings to hard-pressed ratepayers.

Liberals have also made no movement in this budget, as it stands, to reduce the \$1 billion per year in export subsidies.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have made no movement on reining in high executive salaries, and they have made no movement on shifting away from private contracts.

Will Ontario families see relief on their hydro bills? Not likely. Will this government move forward with decisions that have the best interests of Ontarians at heart rather than big energy companies and CEOs? No, Mr. Speaker, it's not likely. It is essential that this government take measures that will actually make a difference in monthly bills for Ontario residents.

Another issue I have raised numerous times in this House is in regard to the unequal access to health care that northerners face. In the last budget, the Liberals committed to a five-day home care guarantee. Now there is no commitment to put in place a service for all those who need home care. There is no commitment to actually reducing the 6,100-person waiting list for home care, and there is nothing to address capping the salaries and bonuses that many health care CEOs are receiving and putting that money into front-line workers. If we cut, and if we save or if we cap those salaries of those CEOs, we can actually invest in our front-line workers.

In the north, many of us know all too well the obstacles we face when seeking medical attention. Most of us have to travel hours to see a doctor or specialist. Sometimes it's very strenuous. It's very stressful for people when they go for dialysis, cancer treatment and so on. You have to prepare yourself one, two and sometimes three days ahead of time. Why? Because you do not have the energy to drive yourself to, and once you get your treatment, drive yourself back. So you have to find a driver. You have to find a vehicle. You have to manage your money. You have to make sure you have somebody there. You have to find accommodations. These are stressful challenges that people from the north always find themselves in.

I've got to add another one: Our roads aren't always open. Our specialists aren't always available. If that road is closed, in the blink of an eye, that appointment has now been rescheduled for two, three, four months down the road, putting more pressure and more stress on those individuals.

And don't even get me started on the northern travel grants. That is something that I've raised in this House many times. This Liberal government kept promising to fix the delays that have been happening with the northern travel grant. People are struggling to make ends meet with their hydro bills, their prescriptions. Now what they're doing is, they're using the valuable dollars they have to get to and from a doctor's appointment, making it difficult for them to make ends meet. Those travel grants are delayed sometimes two, three months. Mr. Speaker, I've dealt with some constituents who have had those grants delayed up to six months. People have cancelled their doctors' appointments because they could not finance or find somebody to care for them, to bring them or to pay to get to a doctor's appointment. That shouldn't happen in Ontario.

But we still find ways that we can blow money away, that we can just spend scandalously. Then when you go knocking on doors, these people really don't understand: "What about me? What is this government doing for me?"

I tried to share a few ideas and give a different perspective to the budget. Again, I want to thank the member from Kitchener–Waterloo for providing me that opportunity.

Again, I want to talk to the members across the way. It's not all rosy in this province. Please don't take this opportunity to say, "I have a majority government," and forget about the rest of this province. Work with the members that you have here across the way. Don't sit there and just smile. Work and continue working with us, and we'll work with you in order to enhance everybody's life across this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments.

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Mr. Yvan Baker: I struggle a little bit with what I just heard from the members opposite. On the one hand, they're saying that our deficit is too high; on the other hand, they're saying our budget is not progressive enough. I think we're doing an excellent job of creating jobs and managing the budget, but we're also doing an excellent job of being progressive, and I'd like to tell you why in the short time that I have.

On creating jobs—one of the issues that the member opposite spent a lot of time talking about—we have a 10-year economic plan that provides the tools for Ontario to seize the opportunities in our economy. We need to attract investment to this province to create jobs, Mr. Speaker. As someone who has been in business for a long time, who has helped companies do just that and invest their capital, I know a little bit about that. We're taking those steps.

In particular, we're keeping our tax system competitive, reducing energy costs for business, cutting red tape and creating a new \$2.5-billion Jobs and Prosperity Fund. This will help secure investments and create jobs. We're lowering energy costs for business, introducing a five-point business energy plan to give small and medium-sized businesses the tools they need to conserve energy. We're also expanding a program that has helped growing businesses use energy to reduce their electricity costs on new projects by 15% to 25%, on average. These are steps we're taking to create jobs.

We're investing in transportation and infrastructure. We're investing \$130 billion in infrastructure over 10 years, and \$29 billion of that is going toward transportation infrastructure. That's what we're doing to create jobs.

We're investing in education. We're preserving funding to health care and education. Education is the foundation for our children's future. That's how we're creating jobs.

When we talk about being progressive, we are lowering energy costs for people in the middle class. We're

increasing support for the most vulnerable, including an enhancement to the Ontario Child Benefit. We're making sure the minimum wage is raised, and we're indexing it to inflation. We're helping by continuing to invest in health care, something that affects my community very deeply, Mr. Speaker.

We are being progressive, but we are managing our financials respectfully and responsibly, and we are creating jobs for the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Again, it's a pleasure to rise in this House. First of all, I'd like to talk what this budget does—okay, let me talk about what it doesn't do.

You see, there's tremendous overspending in this budget right now. Of course, we've seen a lot of tremendous overspending with this government in the last 11 years.

It's a Toronto budget. I understand that. But you know what? It's certainly not a budget for rural Ontario; that's for sure.

We take a look at the debt and deficit. The debt is going to be rising to \$300 billion, and the deficit is \$12.5 billion. I have some real issues and concerns about that, and I'll tell you why. It's because of future generations.

I want to give the Liberals some credit here for a moment, so listen up—

Interjections.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: No, you haven't heard it yet.

I want to give you some credit. When I first heard the budget, I thought, "Who could argue with this budget?" Who could argue with it? But I have one strong lasting question. Is it a progressive budget? Yes, it is. But my concern is, where are going to get the money? That's a big concern. We talk about spending, and you've heard us say "overspending." But the revenues in this province are not coming in the way they should and have been. That's a major concern of mine.

Of course, then we take a look at the deficit and the debt, and then I look at the taxing of future generations, your children and mine, your grandchildren and mine, your great-grandchildren and mine—although I'm not there yet, and I know you're not there yet either. But I think you're starting to get the picture.

So my concern is, we cannot put additional burden on future generations. That's my major concern with this budget.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was very interesting to listen to the NDP finance critic, the member from Kitchener–Waterloo. She did a very good job of going through the main parts of the budget to show what it does and what it doesn't do.

Then we had the member from Algoma–Manitoulin go into more detail as to what the budget really means for the people of northeastern Ontario. He and I share a border in our ridings; where Nickel Belt ends on the west side, his starts on the east side.

Then you really see some parts of our province have been left behind in this budget, and this is wrong. This is not the way a provincial budget should roll out. It should roll out so that there is equity for every Ontarian, no matter where they live.

Our critic, the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, made it clear that this equity, this progressive view was not there. What the member from Algoma–Manitoulin heard at the door about the price of electricity and the price of gas, I heard it at every door also. Did you know, Speaker, that in Sudbury we pay about \$1.45 for gas right now. We can go east about 45 minutes' drive, and you will pay 12 cents less. We can go west about half an hour's drive, and you will pay between 4 and 7 cents less. It makes no sense. The people of Sudbury and Nickel Belt are being gouged at the pump. Yet, when we ask the government to get involved, to step up to the plate, to help the people of the northeast, they're missing in action.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I've certainly heard the comments from the member from Nickel Belt. One of the things I wanted to focus on in the brief time is this notion of equity, the notion that a rising tide should float all boats equally. The first time I went through this budget, the first thing that jumped out at me was just how progressive a budget this was. There is something for virtually every Ontarian, no matter where they live. We're looking at investing in transportation and infrastructure. We've heard from a number of members about the need for bridges and roads in the north, and that's being addressed in the \$100-billion fund.

One of the things that really struck home with me when I was knocking on doors was the need for secure retirement for all Ontarians. Too many people live in poverty when they retire. The response that I got at the door, from seniors especially, who knew that this pension was not for them—it is for their children; it would be for their grandchildren. They were very selfless in saying that they would vote for this government because of the proposed pension.

We talk about building up. We talk about making this province stronger. I certainly know, as a former town councillor and business owner, that you don't build a province, you don't build a business by slashing and burning. You don't build a strong province by running and hiding in the corner and saying that the world is falling down around your ears. You take progressive steps and you build. That's what this budget is doing in many, many ways.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Kitchener–Waterloo has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you very much to the members from Newmarket–Aurora, Nickel Belt, Chatham–Kent–Essex and Etobicoke Centre for your comments on what I had to contribute today.

The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex: It's going to be interesting to see the PC caucus try to reinvent

yourselves. I know you're trying to be softer, kinder and compassionate. It's a little unsettling; I just want to tell you. But we're watching very carefully.

To the member from Etobicoke Centre, around job creation: The record of the Liberal Party speaks for itself. We know what's working and we know what isn't working. When government chooses winners and losers for large corporations, it destabilizes the economy. It indicates to those other businesses that might invest in the province of Ontario that this government is willing to interfere. It's willing to tap one company on the shoulder and invest hundreds of millions of dollars while the other ones, the small and medium-sized businesses, for instance, who truly are the backbone of the economy, are being left aside. We think that there's room for improvement on this. We think that small and medium-sized businesses can be better supported in the province of Ontario, and we know that hydro is one of those factors that affects the choice to invest in the province of Ontario. We know that 34,000 fewer jobs last month is the truth; it is the reality that we are facing. When you factor in youth unemployment, it's a whole other ball of wax.

Now, we have not capitalized on commercializing research from our academic institutions. This province needs to start making things again. We need to focus on advanced manufacturing. It addresses an across-the-board spectrum around job creation. Investment in infrastructure will create jobs. If we can get that two-way all-day GO service, 33,000 jobs are on the line literally; figuratively as well.

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We cannot support this budget for all the reasons that have already been explained. You're not surprised by it; we're not surprised by it. But the people of this province are going to be surprised here too.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to respond.

I was hoping to start it off by saying something to the effect of, "As I was saying," in anticipation that I might have an opportunity to actually deliver a significant part of what I would call my inaugural speech. But I understand now that even though I spoke to a motion—it's against procedural rules to have an inaugural speech, I understood, to a motion—I would have this chance. I respectfully appreciate that I may not get the latitude that I was hoping and I will of course stick as closely as I can to—

Interjection.

Mr. Arthur Potts: But it was on a motion bill. I had latitude yesterday and I appreciate it. I hope in the course of my remarks you will get to know me a little bit better.

Let me start by saying this is a very progressive budget. I was listening to the member from Algoma–Manitoulin. Let me just start by saying that I appreciate very much this idea of wanting to co-operate and to work with us. This is exactly what brought me into politics. I

want you very much to know—and also the member from Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, who made the same comments in his speech—how important it is that we all get a chance to work together. This budget is an opportunity where we can start to work together.

I know in the course of our campaign, going door to door, this was a progressive budget. This was the question that was raised by the member from Algoma—Manitoulin: What was progressive about it? Let me tell you that the members on the doorsteps where I knocked—traditional members of the third party—were so, so unhappy with the fact that this budget didn't go forward when it was first introduced May 1. They saw it as a progressive budget. This was the meat and potatoes of the campaign that we were able to run in Beaches—East York. It was to point to the budget because, frankly, the party should have supported it. This was the message I heard repeatedly. People who had never before voted Liberal or had always voted with the NDP were suddenly saying, “No. This was a budget that should have been supported because it was progressive.”

It's progressive in all sorts of areas, most certainly in job creation areas. I note there are tremendous opportunities. There are revenues being provided in this budget to support agriculture, to support the agri-food businesses. As the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, I'm delighted to have this opportunity to work with the Minister of Agriculture from Peterborough. I look forward to him being a great mentor to me. I know this particular portfolio is extremely important to the Premier, Ms. Wynne, and I thank her for allowing me to participate in this role.

Many think what an interesting opportunity it is for an urban guy like me to be going into a portfolio which is typically more concerned with rural affairs. It was a pleasure to take over the role that the member from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, as the previous parliamentarian—and I'm hoping to get—

Interjection.

Mr. Arthur Potts: A good guy.

I know that the member will be giving me some assistance on how we can spend the money appropriately that's in this budget, that's earmarked in this budget—

Interjection: It's \$40 million.

Mr. Arthur Potts: It's \$40 million plus—

Interjection: For 10 years.

Mr. Arthur Potts: For 10 years—to go forward and assist those businesses.

Also, I've heard comments about how this budget doesn't help people in the north. As part of the portfolio role that I will be playing as parliamentary assistant in rural affairs, I know there are additional revenues to help bring infrastructure into rural communities: gas infrastructure potentially, bridges, things that are important in order to help those communities lower their costs associated with energy because we'll get them on natural gas, which is at historical lows. This is a great opportunity to be heating manufacturing facilities, to be heating barns and processing facilities using gas as a heating source rather than electricity, which is very expensive. That is

part of the commitment this government has in order to help businesses reduce their costs.

We have a five-point plan for businesses to give small and medium businesses the tools they need to conserve energy, to manage costs and save money. We know this will help bring significant new jobs to the province. It's part of our job creation strategy and it's part of what the Premier has repeatedly talked about: building up this province.

What the Premier didn't know when she made me PA to agriculture was that I actually have a fair bit of pedigree in the field. My grandfather was Major General Arthur Potts. He had a doctorate from Cornell University in animal husbandry.

Mr. Grant Crack: Wow.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Yes—in animal husbandry from Cornell University. His first teaching position was in Saskatchewan, at the University of Saskatchewan, at the agricultural college there, where, members would be interested to know, he introduced the first culture for blue cheese to Canada. In the family, we love blue cheese, as I'm sure most of you do. There was an innovation that he brought into agriculture.

We are looking, within this budget, to try to spend some of the revenues that have been set aside to assist new agri-food companies in building Ontario jobs, to bring Ontario produce to the world, not just in its raw source, but manufactured into final end products.

The budget also invests significantly in transportation. You've heard about the \$130-billion 10-year plan; I won't need to repeat it again here. But the plan does have \$29 billion, \$15 billion of which is for transportation in the GTH area.

In my community of Beaches—East York, we have a very important opportunity for transit at Main and Danforth. Main and Danforth should be and will be—and if this budget is adopted, going forward we will turn Main and Danforth into a significant transportation hub for the city of Toronto. This is an opportunity for us to give the downtown relief, which everybody is asking for. Almost 60% of the people who end up at Yonge and Bloor on the Danforth line originate before Main Station. If we can successfully connect the TTC station that's already there with the GO station that's already there, through tunnels and proper opportunities for fare management, probably using the Presto system, people can then get off the TTC at Main and get down to Union Station in 11 minutes. This is where those transportation dollars will be spent, in order to assist people in getting to work faster so that they can spend more time at home. That's a great initiative and I'm looking forward to supporting it.

We also talked about the Ring of Fire, in the previous speech by the member from Algoma—Manitoulin. I'm delighted that he appreciates that there's a billion dollars being invested in infrastructure. Already I know that this government has invested in electrical infrastructure, in pylons, for getting power into the north, which will start to connect areas, and more transmission lines are needed to bring power to the communities that will be processing

the various ores that will be extracted in that extremely important resource. I also see that that billion dollars is not just a billion-dollar investment in and of itself; it's an opportunity to leverage both federal money and corporate money, because that has been the approach of this government over the last years in their job creation funds: to invest some dollars in a company—

Mr. Grant Crack: The law of the lever.

Mr. Arthur Potts: The law of the lever, exactly. Invest some money now, which will leverage money elsewhere.

So that billion could turn into many, many more billions of infrastructure in the Ring of Fire. That will help extract the much-needed resources there.

Also, this budget invests in health care. I stood up earlier this week and spoke about the Toronto East General Hospital. This is such an important, critical addition that they want to build to this hospital, using the monies that are earmarked in the capital fund. About \$134 million was slated to go towards an addition there that's extremely important. The Toronto East General Hospital was so—

Interruption.

Mr. Arthur Potts: It's not me; I don't know what it is.

They were so unhappy to find that that money had gone, in the budget—the election. Had we not gone to this election, all the development and the planning for that hospital would have been advanced three or four more months. When you think about it, the same applies to all of the progressive measures in this budget. Had it been adopted, had it moved forward, we would be four months further ahead in the program to build Ontario up. That's something that I know people at the door were very interested to see.

It is a very progressive budget. We learned that going door to door. Part of that progressiveness will be to reduce emissions in transportation on GO services by electrifying the GO service. The entire GO service needs to be electrified. Get it off diesel, and just as we did with coal-fired plants, this will be one of the greatest greenhouse gas reductions—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I thank the member from Beaches–East York. Due to the fact that it's 6 o'clock, we'll continue where he left off later on.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): This House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1800.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

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Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Samia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
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Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
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Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
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Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
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Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton–Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Sylvia Jones, Jack MacLaren
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First Session, 41st Parliament

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Première session, 41^e législature

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Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 17 July 2014

Jeudi 17 juillet 2014



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 17 July 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 17 juillet 2014

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.
Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUILDING OPPORTUNITY AND SECURING OUR FUTURE ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2014

LOI DE 2014 OUVRANT DES PERSPECTIVES ET ASSURANT NOTRE AVENIR (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Resuming the debate adjourned on July 16, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 14, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts / *Projet de loi 14, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Mr. Arthur Potts: It gives me great honour to continue my remarks on the budget bill, and I look forward now to—I had an opportunity to speak yesterday, when we talked at length about what a progressive budget this was. As I went door to door in my community, I heard repeatedly how much people wanted us to enact this budget. This was the platform we ran on.

What I have a sense of is that the budget debate—we've already had it. We had it during the course of an entire campaign, where I think the party's direction, the plan, which was contained in the budget, was one that was overwhelmingly supported across the province, resulting in the results of the election that we have. What I, of course, like most about this budget is how progressive it is.

If you'll permit, my father taught me to be a Liberal. My father was a great inspiration to me—my father, Justice Joseph Potts. He was born in Saskatchewan, and he came to Toronto as a lawyer, developed a career practice where he was very active in the Canadian Bar Association, was the president of the Ontario Bar Association. He taught me about being a Liberal.

What is so important in this budget is how progressive it is. He once showed me a speech that was given by a French philosopher named Étienne Gilson. Étienne Gilson spoke to a Liberal gathering in 1958 in which he

defined what it meant to be a Liberal. I think that his definition of "Liberal" is contained in this budget because of the support it gives in social justice, the recommendations it has from the Lankin-Sheikh report, and that we were going to implement it. We've gone a long way to bringing child poverty more money for children in low-income situations. But Mr. Gilson defined being a Liberal as one who seeks direction from the majority but with due regard for the rights of minorities. I think that's such an important concept, which is contained in my fundamental belief for liberalism, and I think you'll see that those kinds of measures are contained in this budget bill.

I heard, in some of the other members' comments about the bill, concern about energy rates, particularly in low-income housing. As you know, in this budget bill we have a plan to remove the debt retirement charge off energy bills which will relieve homeowners of about, I think it's 7% or 8% of the costs of those energy bills—by taking the debt retirement charge off their energy bills. That's a very, very important initiative that will help lower electrical charges for everyone across the province.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, you probably would be aware that there is a provision for a 10% reduction for energy bills for low-income families. This is another example of how we are trying to make and going to make energy rates more affordable for families in Ontario.

Now, part of the concern with high energy rates is that people want to blame our green energy policies for having jacked up the price of energy. Let's be very clear. We've seen the report from the Environmental Commissioner which said that the cost impact of the green energy proposals is a minimal part of the increase that people have experienced. Most of the increase that people are experiencing in their bills has to do with having to rebuild the energy infrastructure of this province, particularly for peak-demand energy needs.

It was a commitment of our government to phase out coal-powered generation plants. That was an absolutely critical thing that had to be done. There are thousands of people every year whose lives are made better because they're not breathing the smog and particulates associated with those plants. It has reduced the number of premature deaths as a result of asthma and other breathing complications, by removing those gas plants. But having removed those gas plants, you have to replace them.

We have done a good job of replacing those gas plants in communities that needed it, such as the Portlands Energy Centre which is an absolutely critical piece of infrastructure for downtown Toronto. I would tell the constituents, as I was at the door in Beaches-East York,

that if we did not have the Portlands Energy Centre, we would be suffering from blackouts and brownouts far more regularly, as other people in this province have experienced. We have a much better energy system in downtown Toronto because this government insisted on putting in a plant in the face of tremendous opposition from the local community. But that plant is there, and I tell you that the people of Beaches–East York and Toronto–Danforth, which I have the pleasure of it being my home riding, absolutely were delighted that those plants were there.

This infrastructure money that we have in this bill, \$130 billion, will also help us to create more distributed energy plants and gas-fired plants to deal with peak-demand periods. Every environmentalist will tell you that the most important way of developing an infrastructure system in electricity is to have generation close to consumption. You don't want the spillage associated with long transmission.

So in the infrastructure commitments that this government has, you will see an opportunity to relocate some of the other gas plants that did not get built as they should have been built. We'll relocate, use some of the assets that are stranded in those contracts and build gas plants in communities that will need it. That's an important point moving forward in energy.

I want to speak a little bit now on government assets. During the course of the election, we heard repeatedly in my riding that the number one reason that the third party did not support the budget that was brought in on May 1 had to do with the sale of assets. The NDP candidate in my riding repeatedly referred to, what I think is meant by the Trojan Horse budget comments of the leader of the third party, that this was all buried deep down in the appendix of the budget documents. Particularly, he was referring to the sale of the LCBO.

Now, let's be very clear: There is absolutely no plan in place right now to sell the LCBO. That's just fear-mongering on the part of others. We are going to review all government assets, including the LCBO, with a view to making sure that we are maximizing the value of those assets. The LCBO holds dozens and dozens of properties that may not be getting the best value. It may be, as part of that review, that we look at the real estate assets of the LCBO and we sell them off, because there's no point in us holding land that's not being used effectively. If we can take the sales associated with that and put it into the Trillium fund and use the Trillium fund to build up productive assets elsewhere in the province, I think that would be a fantastic step forward. That is part of the review that is being done with Mr. Clark. We look forward to his report and ensuring that we're maximizing the value of government assets.

Another government asset we hold, that I just for the life of me can't understand why members on both sides of the House aren't unanimously in agreement that we should be selling off, are the shares that we hold in General Motors. This government, as part of its investment strategy and its strategy to retain jobs in Ontario during

the auto industry crisis, went out of its way to work with the major manufacturers of automobiles in Ontario to ensure that we continue to keep these good jobs in Canada, in Ontario, to keep Ontarians at work. As part of that deal we acquired a lot of shares in General Motors.

0910

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: A billion dollars' worth.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Is it a billion dollars? Thank you, Mr. Rinaldi. Lou tells me it was \$1 billion.

Why we wouldn't want to sell off a government asset of shares that we hold in General Motors is beyond me. This is the right thing to do. Their share values are up. We want to capitalize on the investment we made in creating those jobs and keeping that manufacturing in Ontario, and we should sell off those shares. That's just one example of how we do hold assets that are being unproductive, and we can take those dollars and put them in the Trillium fund and use them as part of our plan to build Ontario up.

I'd like to also talk a bit about the Ontario pension plan. I repeatedly heard at the door how important it was, for the retirement security of residents in Beaches–East York, that we do something in this area. You all know it's not our preferred option. We believe the federal government should be stepping up to the table, and I think what we're showing is tremendous leadership in Ontario, that the Premier is making it clear that this is going to happen in Ontario, that we're going to boost the value of retirement pensions for hard-working Ontarians and we want the federal government to come along with us. What we've done by putting this plan in place is we are now able to talk to other provincial jurisdictions and have them think along the same lines. This will be an opportunity for other jurisdictions to come in provincially and at some point, you can rest assured, the government of Canada is going to see the value of bringing in a national program, rather than having 11 disparate provincial programs as add-ons to their own program. That would be the efficient thing to do; that would be the federal government stepping up and taking responsibility for income retirement security. We want to be able to retire with dignity at an income level that's appropriate, and currently there's a significant gap between what the CPP will provide and what we would need to have as part of a living wage.

These are the kinds of measures that we see in this extremely, extremely progressive budget bill. I urge all members of the House, during committees this week, to reflect on those conversations you had at the door with people who recognize that we need to do more in transportation, we need to do more in transit, particularly in the GTHA, so that we can move people faster, so we can electrify the GO rail system. These are the important things that I want you to remember as we go to hearings, and I appreciate very much, Mr. Speaker, this opportunity to speak to the budget bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Harris: I'd like to first off welcome the member for Beaches–East York and congratulate him on

his election campaign, of course. Welcome to a fine building. I'm amazed and impressed each and every day that I walk into this building. I'm so thankful that I have the opportunity to stand up and speak on behalf of my constituents, and I know he'll feel the same.

I think it's important, given the opportunity—I'm speaking after the member for Beaches–East York. I want to thank the former member for Beaches–East York, Michael Prue, who I had an opportunity to serve with over the last two and a half years. I was a rookie member on an estimates committee that he chaired, and we went into some lengthy committee meetings on gas plants. You know what? It was difficult at times, but I was always impressed with Michael—his work ethic, his commitment, and his thankfulness for getting up early and making us a nice dessert that we could enjoy during committee. I want to thank him not only for that but for his service as an MPP for his riding and his community for the number of years that he did. I did have a chance to chat with Michael after the election. I wished him well in everything that he will now do forthcoming. I know he still has a lot to offer to his community. I know he is an avid traveller, touring all over the world, and I know he'll probably get some time in with his loved ones and see some new things.

I'll leave it at that, Speaker. Again, I welcome the member for Beaches–East York and I hope I have a further opportunity to speak again to the fiscal reality that our province has faced, that I know he heard at the doorsteps as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I'm just happy and delighted to have been here yesterday for the comments from the member from Beaches–East York, where he talked about the budget in regard to building Ontario up and also this budget being a progressive budget.

I just wanted to remind him of the difficulties that certain communities are actually really facing, and trying to explain to them how progressive this budget is. Let me just share some numbers with you, as I did with you yesterday, in regard to one community particularly, the community of Wawa, but there are 110 other communities that are going to be affected by this so-called progressive budget of yours.

The community of Wawa, in 2015, are going to be subject to a cut in their municipal budget of \$74,000. In 2016, they're going to be cut by \$248,923. In 2017, they're going to lose another \$558,415. That is due to the cut that this government is doing to the Power Dam Special Payment Program.

Now, what I would like you to do is, if this was the case and you were knocking on your doors in Beaches–East York, here's the per capita; here's the reality. This is what you would have been knocking on the doors with in your area. If you do the multiple factor, the population of Wawa is 2,975, and here in Toronto it is 2,600,000. The loss to Wawa is \$882,000. Would you have gone knocking on any doors in your area to tell them that your

Liberal government is going to be taking \$770 million out of their budget? I don't think so. That's the reality of your progressive budget.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Scarborough–Agincourt.

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise today to join in the debate on the 2014 budget, building opportunity and securing Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, let me also begin my remarks this morning to congratulate my new colleague from Beaches–East York and also to acknowledge the former member for Beaches–East York, because I knew Michael Prue for a number of years as a former mayor of East York. I also worked with him on the former Metro Toronto District Health Council. I know Michael has served his province and the city very well.

As the member from Beaches–East York clearly stated earlier, our government is making an investment in transportation and infrastructure as one of the priorities. It is of great interest in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt. In my very short time this morning, I'd like to re-emphasize our government's commitment of \$29 billion over the next 10 years to address public transit, transportation, infrastructure and other priority infrastructure projects across Ontario.

It says very clearly in the budget book on page 44, "Two new dedicated funds would be created to support infrastructure projects that are essential to Ontario's immediate and long-term economic growth and job creation." I'm very pleased, Mr. Speaker, that one of these funds would target specifically the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. These particular allocations for these two funds were based on census data from Statistics Canada. So based on data, based on facts, allocation of the proceeds of these funds will be allocated based on fairness, accountability and transparency.

We all know congestion is not good for your health, and I know my colleague from Beaches–East York talked about that earlier. We also know we want to spend more time with people we love than being stuck in traffic.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you very much, Speaker. Good morning.

Through you to the member for Beaches–East York: I want to congratulate you on your election. I also want to congratulate you on your appointment as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

I want to tell you—through you, Speaker, to the member—we had a great meeting last night in my riding. I was in my riding last night in Kemptville at an event for Kemptville College. It was the Kemptville College Renewal Task Force. Your provincial facilitator, the Honourable Lyle Vancief, was there. He wasn't there to speak to the media necessarily, but there to listen to the agricultural community.

So, through you, Speaker, to the member: I just want to take this opportunity to invite you, as I did to the

minister, and also to Minister Moridi, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities and Innovation and all those other things that he is—I also want to invite you to tour Kemptville College. I would be more than happy to introduce you to the Kemptville College Renewal Task Force and have you tour that fine campus that's got a 97-year tradition. I know I speak on behalf of the people of Leeds–Grenville, if I might, directly to the member, that this is a wonderful institution. I hope that you, in your capacity as parliamentary assistant, will take the opportunity to see what potential we have at that campus to ensure that it's around for its centennial in 2017. Congratulations, and welcome to Queen's Park.

0920

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Beaches–East York, you have two minutes for a reply.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I certainly want to thank the member from Kitchener–Conestoga. We met and had a chat last night. I'm not a great baker. I don't see myself bringing cookies in here on a regular basis. I apologize for that. I'll do my best to be as good a representative here as Mr. Prue was, but it may not include cookies.

And my apologies to the pages: Mr. Prue, I've come to understand, used to keep sweets in his desk, and the pages would come up and get chocolate quite often. I'm thinking, in my interest in preserving the health of our youth, that I might have carrot sticks and broccoli, and maybe I'll try a new tradition which is a healthier choice.

I'd also like to respond to the member from Algoma–Manitoulin. I appreciate your comments very much. Of course, the concerns of the citizens of Wawa are very important to this government, and we're listening very carefully. If these downloads and reductions are hurting, they need to be looked at very carefully. But I also remind you that you must look at this in terms of a net financing position. The town of Wawa, in your riding, has been benefiting from the uploading we've done, taking on the costs that were downloaded to under the previous Harris government. I think you need to look at the net benefit of whether, in fact, your bottom line is lower.

I'd also like to thank the member from Leeds–Grenville. I know that the Kemptville College is under some duress and pressures right now. The minister and I have talked about it, that we are going to seek some kind of solution. That may not involve the ministry directly, but it needs to be maintained. It seems like a great institution. As I mentioned in my remarks, my grandfather had a doctorate in animal husbandry, and so the education of agricultural students is very, very important. We know the great tradition that Kemptville College has had.

My friend from Scarborough–Agincourt: Thank you so much for your kind remarks. I'm looking forward to working with you as we go forward and bringing this budget to fruition.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I look forward to having the opportunity to speak to this budget for the next—are you

sitting down?—45 minutes. I promise it will be scintillating for you. I'll do everything I can.

Good morning, everybody. I wanted to have a chance to chat about the budget. I'm going to start off rather critical, as you can imagine, because the budget is the same one that the Liberal government introduced on May 1. We've carefully looked at it. There's not a comma changed. It is the exact same budget that Maclean's magazine called, "A unicorn budget built on delusion...." That's what our leading national magazine called it. Of course, it immediately sparked a credit watch from Moody's rating services, who also recently downgraded their credit outlook from stable to negative. That's not a very proud thing for what was once the engine of Confederation, this province of Ontario, now reduced to a have-not province after 11 years of Liberal reign.

This budget recklessly puts Ontario's finances in a very precarious and teetering position. We see a deteriorating fiscal balance sheet, and that's what BlackRock, when they came out with their credit notice as well on the 13th of June, had said, "...a deteriorating financial balance sheet." That's how Ontario is characterized in the marketplace.

What does that mean to the people at home today? Let me tell you exactly why a \$12.5-billion deficit is hurting you at home. We started many years ago with deficits, and we saw the \$139-billion debt of Ontario double under the last 11 years of Liberal reign to over \$290 billion. That debt has doubled. Two years ago, our deficit was \$9.2 billion. Last year it grew to \$11.3 billion, and this year it is forecast to be \$12.5 billion. Because we have such a huge deficit, this government has immediately made very serious cuts to front-line services. I can tell you specifically that they have cut physiotherapy for seniors; they have cut cataract surgeries for seniors, again; they've cut diabetes testing strips—this is a very, very concerning issue, when people who can't afford these testing strips are now not testing. We know that's only going to increase our health costs in the end. To use the expression, they've cut off their nose to spite their face. Or the other expression: They can't see the forest for the trees—that's a more northern expression. They're looking for nickels and dimes in the couch, and this is what they've done: They've cut off diabetes testing strips.

Of course, we've already seen them fire nurses, over 300 throughout Ontario. In my hometown of North Bay last year we lost 40 front-line health care workers; this year so far, an additional 34 front-line health care workers. We lost eight teachers two weeks ago. We lost 67 telecom workers at Ontera. This is exactly what happens when you can't balance the budget.

We have deficits here in Ontario. We have deficits forecast next year, the year after, and of course all of the rating agencies presume that this government has no path to balance the budget in 2017-18, as they continue to say. In fact, their own Ministry of Finance documents—when Premier Wynne was appointed as Premier back in 2013, she received a briefing from the Ministry of Finance

which we were able to receive a copy of through our estimates committee—after about a half a year of prodding for it, I might add. In that it very, very clearly stated that there is no plan to balance the budget by 2017-18, period. It was very succinct.

This means that there will be continued cuts to front-line services. So let me tell you—if you look at, I think it was page 244 of the budget, it talks about the budget going forward with health at a 2.2% increase, education at 2.3%, training at 1%, social services at 3.5%, justice at 0.8%. Those are the increases. The rest of the ministries all have a 6% decrease—a 6% decrease, when more than 50% of each and every ministry's expenses are comprised of people—human capital.

When you look at the health budget, increasing it by 2.2% is actually a massive, multi-billion dollar reduction, and here's why: Each year, health is increased 6%. To only increase 2.2% is an almost 4% reduction in the budget that was originally planned. Every 1% of health budget is about \$500 million. So they're cutting more than \$1.5 billion out of health care this very year alone. Now in health care, 80% of their budget is people. So when you start cutting \$1.5 billion out of health care, you're starting to talk about a serious number of front-line people, like the 300 nurses they've already fired and, as I said, the ones in North Bay: 40 last year, 34 so far this year.

When you can't afford the bare necessities, you start looking for the nickels and dimes, the change in the couch. They announced they're closing 60 beds in our hospital. Our hospital is a \$1-billion hospital. It was only opened a few years ago. It was opened while I was the mayor of the city of North Bay, and I left in 2010. So the hospital is about five years old, a brand spanking new hospital. And we're cutting 60 beds because they have no money, because we have a \$12.5-billion deficit. That's why we talk about deficits so much. This is money; a deficit is money that you spend that you don't have coming in. We're spending more than we take in.

So did this budget do anything to address the deficit, to protect the very front-line services that we have come to require in Ontario? No, it did not. It did not do anything to protect front-line services. It did nothing to address the teetering financial situation that this government has got us into.

0930

In fact, what it did was go the opposite way. It said they are going to tax and then spend. They're going to tax you more and spend your money. They're going to spend \$5.7 billion more than last year. That's not the prudent way. If you were in your household and you or your spouse, one of you, lost a job, you would not go on a spending spree; you would start to tighten your budget until more money was coming in.

The Bank of Canada has told us last year, this year, last month, and this morning on the front page of the National Post that the problem is we're not going to make our revenue targets this year. Our growth is not happening. This is a government that had planned on

“growing their way out of the problem”—except for the fact that growth is not going to happen. It's very clear—very, very clear. The Bank of Canada and every other institution is telling us we are not going to hit our revenue targets for this year. Yet we're talking about how we're going to grow our way out of the problem and spend our way. Well, if the growth doesn't happen, we're still spending. So deficits are going to continue under this particular government.

In fact, what actually happened—if you could imagine the awkwardness of this, they're actually going to increase taxes and yet increase the deficit at the same time. How bizarre a scenario is that? How could that even possibly happen, that you're going to raise taxes from people and still have a higher deficit, over \$1 billion higher than last year?

So let's talk about some of these taxes that they're going to raise. One is the aviation fuel tax. I must say I'm quite surprised at this aviation fuel tax, because what this does is take somewhere between \$40 million and \$65 million away from the airlines by increasing the fuel tax from 2.7 cents a litre to 6.7 cents a litre. This is adding 4 cents a litre. This is outrageous not just for passenger service—we're not talking about how this is going to hurt families flying to Hawaii for the year; this is about families that are on a medical emergency, where they need to take a flight. These flights are now going to cost more. Cargo, aircraft that bring in clothing, shoes, products that we trade worldwide, products we ship in exports, our sales—all of these products are going to cost more money. They're going to cost more money to sell and they're going to cost more money to buy because we've more than doubled the aviation fuel tax.

If you look at other areas of the country—look at Vancouver, for instance. They just got 22 new international flights in and out of Vancouver International Airport because they have removed the aviation fuel tax for those international flights. So British Columbia got it right. They're taking the tax and wiping it off. There is no aviation tax for those international flights and now they've got 22 new flights. All the business, the landing fees, the repair and overhaul and maintenance, the fuel that they sell—all of this is business. That's how you do business. I have never seen how increased taxes increase business. I've been an entrepreneur all my life, I've been in business and owned my own company for many years, and I've never seen how new taxes increase business. It is the other way, period.

So British Columbia got it right. They cut the aviation tax right down to zero for those international flights; they got more business. Here in Ontario we do the opposite. We're looking for these nickel and dimes in the couch: “So let's go after these guys next. We haven't picked their pockets lately. Boom. Let's go after the airlines,” which means their customers, their cargo, medical flights—all of these things. That's what they're going to do. That's exactly the kind of taxes that this government is adding.

They talked, interestingly enough, about the Trillium Trust. This is an interesting thought, not unlike the

thought we had, as well, in part of our plan: an infrastructure trust. But I've read the bill carefully, I've been briefed carefully, and we have found what I term a very massive loophole in this Trillium Trust.

Let me tell you, basically, the way it's supposed to work. They're supposed to look at the assets that they own throughout Ontario—admirable. They're supposed to look at selling these non-productive assets, taking that money, putting it in the Trillium Trust and using that for infrastructure. That's the plan, except if you look very, very carefully at the Trillium Trust Act—now, here's the rub, Speaker; here's where it starts to go off the rails for me. They're supposed to take the money, put it in the Trillium Trust and spend it on infrastructure. The act states that “When a qualifying asset”—the one magic word is “qualifying”—“is disposed of, the regulations may”—that's the second funny word: “may”—“require that a portion”—that's the third funny word—“of the net proceeds ... be credited to the Trillium Trust.” Basically what they're saying is, “We're going to sell an asset. We're going to take that money, put it in the Trillium Trust and build infrastructure.” But let's look at those wiggly words again.

“Qualifying assets”: When they sell an asset, the bill says that they then get the opportunity to decide what is a qualifying asset. In their own guidelines that they make up themselves, if it doesn't qualify, then they get to use that money for anything. They'll put it in general revenue and help pay down their deficit. That's what it's really all about. It's not about investing in infrastructure. They get to choose the guidelines to say, “Yes, that's a qualifying asset,” or “No.” If it's “Yes,” then it goes into the Trillium Trust; if they say, “No, that doesn't qualify,” then they can use that money for anything. That's number 1.

Number 2: “The regulations may”—it doesn't say the regulations must put that money; they may put the money in the trust. Well, what's to stop these guys from raiding the piggy bank, like they did with other piggy banks they raided, and using that money—right into general revenue—to bring their deficit down? That word “may” is the other wiggly word.

The third one: a “portion” of the proceeds. So they don't have to put it all in. Once they have a qualifying one, they may decide, and if they do decide, now we're into the third wiggly word: “portion.” They don't have to put all the money into the Trillium Trust. They can put a portion of it—a fraction of it, for all we know; we're never going to know—and that money then, again, goes into general operating revenue and helps bring their deficit down.

Basically, what they're doing is selling the furniture to pay the bills. That's what they're doing here, and hoping, with a Hail Mary pass, that, about three years from now, the economy will somehow magically turn around—although the Bank of Canada says no, the bond rating firms say no, and all of the financial people who know say no. It's not going to happen. You can't just wish that your economy is going to turn around. You actually have to do things to make your economy turn around. I'll talk

about that in a moment. But the thing is, they're selling the furniture off to pay the bills.

Yes, I'm quite certain they'll put some of that money in the Trillium Trust. We'll hear about that. Things like the GM shares—I have no doubt that that will entirely end up in the Trillium Trust. It would just be too hard to fudge that one. That's too much under the microscope. But all the other asset sales—that's the money that they can “not have to qualify”, and then only “may”, and then put a “portion”. That's what's so darned scary about doing that. We're talking billions of dollars here, people. We're not talking about pennies; we're talking about billions.

Instead of getting into the fundamental core of what's wrong in Ontario, this budget does nothing to address those very issues.

One of those issues was skyrocketing electricity rates. Speaker, this entire budget does absolutely nothing to address skyrocketing electricity rates. We just came off a lengthy campaign, since the 2nd of May. We all knocked on doors. You can't tell me that you did not hear people talking about their hydro bills at the door—people, seniors, families, businesses; businesses that have left Ontario, businesses that are planning to leave Ontario because they can't afford the hydro bill. I've stood in this Legislature and used the example of Xstrata Copper in Timmins at least 25 times. We're talking about 672 people in a town of 45,000—Timmins, Ontario—who lost their jobs because the company moved across the border into Quebec for cheaper hydro.

0940

This bill does absolutely nothing for hydro. It doesn't address it whatsoever. It does mention where they're going to merge the IESO and the Ontario Power Authority, the OPA, into one, for a savings of a few million dollars. This is nothing that we're talking about, Speaker. We're talking about a core problem in Ontario. Until we fix this problem, until we make hydro affordable in Ontario like it was before this government took over and began tinkering with it—before that happens, we will not see the turnaround that we need in Ontario.

You can't just wish that it's going to happen. You can't just spend your way out of the problem when your income is coming down. Revenue is going down. We will not hit our revenue targets. We've been told that over and over, but you're going to spend as if we are. That is why we have a \$12.5-billion deficit.

Speaker, I wanted to talk about not only the electricity rates as one of the solutions, but our mutual friend Don Drummond had some very interesting things to say. I'm going to speak from my book, *Fedeli Focus on Finance*—a shameless plug. I am going to read a couple of paragraphs because I'm quoting Don Drummond.

Page 36: First of all, he outlines some big-ticket reforms that he said would be “an important turning point in the province's history.” He called for a “sharp degree of fiscal restraint.” Stop me if you've heard this before, or if any of this sounds like anything you're actually doing. “Sharp degree of fiscal restraint”: I don't think a

\$5.7-billion spending spree is that fiscal restraint that your own Don Drummond talked about.

He said, “The government must take daring fiscal action early.” Well, I don’t see anything daring in this budget. You’re taxing and you’re spending. There’s nothing daring, and this is two years old. There’s nothing early that you’ve done.

He also said we must act “swiftly and boldly.” Well, not too swift, because that’s two years old now, and “boldly” raising the aviation fuel tax, causing businesses and families to suffer? I’m not sure that that’s bold. I think that’s just the easy way out.

To balance the budget will require “tough decisions.” Treatment will be “difficult,” and “most of the burden ... must fall on spending.” Well, no burden fell here, Speaker. Spending is up—\$5.7 billion in new spending, a \$12.5-billion deficit. That spending isn’t one-time spending; that’s now baked into the budget. That is why we have a structural deficit in the budget, and that means it takes something a lot more to fix it. These aren’t just one-time gifts that are thrown out; this is built into the budget now so that next year, the budget starts at an already higher number. They’re baked in.

Don Drummond called for—and this is the last one I’ll read—“a wrenching reduction from the path that spending is now on.” He’s calling for this wrenching reduction, and what did they do? A spending spree, exactly and entirely the complete opposite of what is called for.

So here we are, more than two years later, and the Liberals are planning an expenditure review. That’s what they’re going to do. They’re going to do another study to take care of these urgent, two-years-ago recommendations by their own Don Drummond.

Another item in this budget is the Ring of Fire. Look, these guys have blown it so far. We can’t afford another four or five years of having you blow it again. We really need you to step up to the plate on the Ring of Fire. We absolutely need this to happen.

First of all, let me tell you a little bit about the Ring of Fire. This is a mining find in the Far North, in northern Ontario. It is, according to both sides’ experts, about a \$60-billion mining find. It’s very complicated to get there. I have been there four times now, in 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014. The first time I was there, let me tell you, it was so exciting. It must have been like a mining camp would have been 100 years ago, when they discovered nickel in Sudbury or silver in Cobalt. You’re in the middle of nowhere, there’s nothing there, you have tents set up—as I was flying on the last flight of many to get there in a helicopter, I saw these blue-and-white tents. A big smile came across my face, because I recognized those tents. When I was in my marketing business in the 1970s, Canadian Can-Tex was one of my clients. They’re in Rutherglen, Ontario, which is in my riding. That trademark blue-and-white tent was made in my riding. As I’m flying in the helicopter and I see those tents, a big smile because they’re made in my riding.

As we got a little closer to landing, these massive, massive mounds of drill rods—again, a bigger smile, be-

cause North Bay and Powassan, also in my riding, have 12 manufacturers of drill rods and drill bits. North Bay-Nipissing is one of the world’s pre-eminent exploration centres. We’re one of the largest centres in the world for exploration products. We make them in North Bay. They use them all over the world. They use them in Sudbury; they use them in Timmins; they use them in the Far North; they use them in all countries, on all continents. It’s amazing, the shipping that comes out of North Bay. So I’m looking at these mounds of drill rods and the city built of tents. There are 250 men and women working at Noront and Cliffs resources, about 125 on each side of the fence, and it was so exciting, because they were drilling. They’ve got drill rigs which are also made in North Bay. They’ve got drill rigs drilling for chromite, the exciting mineral—the first find in North America, other than South Africa, Kazakhstan, Finland; there are a few places in the world. Chromite is used to make stainless steel. Now we have a chromite find, \$60 billion worth of chromite. These people are working. It was so exciting. You could just feel the energy.

I wasn’t yet an MPP. I was thinking about running at that time. It’s one of those things that inspired me. It was so exciting, it was just so thrilling to see this happening. But sadly, virtually nothing has happened in all of these subsequent years—very, very tragic. The government here has dithered on this and let opportunity slide right through their fingers. The last time I was up was before this election, and there weren’t 250 men and women any more; there were fewer than a dozen. I said to one of the companies, “What on earth is going on?” One company, only two summers ago, spent \$200 million exploring—drill rods, drill bits, mostly from my hometown. Some \$200 million was spent by just one company; there are 33 companies drilling. One company alone spent \$200 million. Now they have four people there. They’re spending zero. I said to them, “How can you go from \$200 million to zero?” They said, “Our shareholders are who we are answering to. Why would I continue to spend my shareholders’ money drilling to delineate the ore body”—to define it so they know how to mine it after—“when there’s no way to get the ore out of the ground into the marketplace?” There’s no highway, there’s no road, there’s no rail, and there’s no plan. If there was even hope for them, they would be continuing there.

0950

So now Cliffs is gone. They’ve sold their camp. Noront has four, five, six people, perhaps, at the most, just taking care of the infrastructure and their investment there—babysitting it, if you will, waiting for this government.

So we did see a glimmer of hope in the budget, but then that glimmer was certainly changed very quickly. Back in May, during the campaign, our Premier, Kathleen Wynne, was in Thunder Bay saying, “We will commit a billion dollars, with or without the federal government involvement, towards the transportation infrastructure that will help make the Ring of Fire a reality.” I applaud that. I do. I applaud that: “We will commit a billion

dollars.” Sadly, this is about the fifth time I’ve heard that. Five years have gone by. So this time we’re going to take her at her word.

Now, that was May. Here’s the July 14 budget document, page 89: We will commit \$1 billion towards infrastructure development in the Ring of Fire, “contingent on matching investment by the federal government.” So they’ve already waffled.

I have spoken with the minister involved, and he continues to tell me that they’ve never made an application for infrastructure money. They have never done that for the Ring of Fire, period. They’ve never made an application. All of the other applications that they partner with, they have made and received that money. They have not even made an application. But here we are, one day during the campaign, when we’re promising, “We will do it with or without the federal government involvement.” We cheered that, and now it’s “contingent on matching investment from the federal government,” which I know will come, but now they’ve waffled already. This just deflates—

Mr. Bob Delaney: When? Tell us when.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Well, on the 14th of July, when you changed your mind from the 25th of May; that’s a pretty big waffle. I’ll tell you, it’s the marketplace that answers that when you’ve got everybody just yawning again: “Oh, here they go again.”

Now they’re going to form a development corporation within 60 days, and now the minister is waffling, “Well, is it 60 days from this day? Is it 60 days from that day?” Come on. For heaven’s sake. Again, that’s the fifth time they’ve announced the development corporation. Sadly, the companies aren’t being fooled. We want the Ring of Fire to be developed.

By outlining the shortcomings of this government, I’m hoping you’ll acknowledge you haven’t done it right. There’s still no ore coming out of the ground. You can’t fool us for much longer. Come on. There’s \$60 billion at stake here. This isn’t just about the Far North. It’s not just about northern Ontario. It’s about all of Ontario. This is the economic engine to get Ontario going again. You’ve got to stop the dithering and the waffling on this, the blame game and the finger pointing. We did that when we were in kindergarten; not today, guys. Not today.

Speaker, I’m going to close in a couple of moments, but I just want to say that I think the most disappointing aspect of this budget was the 34,000 men and women in Ontario who lost their jobs in the month of June alone—that this budget does absolutely nothing for those men and women. It doesn’t provide them any hope. It doesn’t lower their energy bills. It raises the cost of goods they’re going to buy through your aviation fuel tax.

It is the 90th consecutive month that Ontario has had higher than the national average unemployment. Our unemployment is 7.5%, up from 7.3% in May, while the national unemployment is 7.1%. We’re not doing it right, yet you are doing the same thing over and over and over. You’re not addressing the unemployment. It’s rising. You can’t tell us how good it is when we’re the worst for

90 consecutive months. That’s not a made-up number; that’s just a fact. It’s seven and a half years of having unemployment higher than the national average. Come on, people, let’s do something to address this.

Electricity rates: the highest in North America. You know, when you guys took office, they were 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour. Before May, they were 12.9 cents a kilowatt hour. Now they’re over 13 cents. You’ve tripled hydro rates, and you’ve caused companies to leave—leave, leave and leave. We lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs under your watch.

People, we can’t just keep doing the same thing and thinking that’s going to help us get out of this. We cannot think that we’re going to continue to raise taxes and somehow high taxes are going to bring business—it’s not going to happen—and somehow this spending spree that you’re going to go on is just going to work itself out.

I know I heard Justin Trudeau say the budget will work itself out, that these things just work themselves out. This is what I’m seeing from this side, as well. I’m looking at you, and you’re thinking, “Well, you know what? Don’t worry. We’re going to spend our way out of this problem, but don’t worry. It’ll work itself out.”

The Hail Mary pass is not coming, folks, not when you didn’t address core problems like high electricity, not when you don’t address the core problems like 34,000 jobs lost last month and not when your solution is just to raise taxes.

Speaker, I see the time is coming close to an end. I’m getting the high sign from our House leaders here.

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I was on a roll. I was having fun.

Speaker, I encourage this government to listen to the people, and to take some of the thoughts of the opposition parties, who have throughout the last two and a half years presented some thoughtful solutions.

Look, I know I love to rail on the Ring of Fire, only because of the passion that I have for it and the potential for Ontario that I know it has. We do want to work together with you on the Ring of Fire, but you’ve got to stop the blame game. You’ve got to just start looking at what we can truly be doing.

Are we going to be investing in roads? Are we going to be investing in rail? You’ve got to bring Ontario Northland and my hometown of North Bay to the table. These are your transportation experts. They’ve been hauling ore for over 100 years in Ontario, from the north to the south. They’ve been doing that, and you haven’t asked them to the table yet.

You’re selling off Ontera. Again, you’re looking for nickels and dimes in the couch to pay your bills. The Auditor General told us that you’re not going to save any money selling Ontera; it’s going to cost you between \$50 million and \$70 million, so why would you do it? If the whole reason was to save money, and you’ve been told by the auditor that you’re not, why are you going through with this fire sale, and why aren’t you bringing Ontario Northland—the experts—to the table, so that they can talk to you about really positive solutions on the Ring of Fire?

Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak in this Legislature again today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments. The member for Sudbury.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Thank you, Speaker. Through you to the member from Nipissing: It's hard to follow such a passionate 45 minutes or so of commentary on the budget.

I must say that the Ring of Fire is extremely important. I also went through some ups and downs as a city councillor, attending functions with the management of Cliffs—ribbon cuttings and huge announcements. It was almost like it was going to happen—obviously not overnight, but in the near future.

That was several years ago. The potential for all of northern Ontario—remembering that any revenues that come out of natural resources, which is northern Ontario, for the most part, for over 100 years, have provided funds for the coffers of the province, which benefits all of the province and all the citizens across this province. We do need to move on.

We need to forget the fact that there have been failings, that plans weren't done. We're talking about thousands of construction jobs in Greater Sudbury. We're talking about smelting north of Capreol in the riding of Nickel Belt, which benefits all of Sudbury, but also benefits all the supply and service companies which go beyond the border of Sudbury. Cliffs is important; it must be our priority.

We talk about hydro rates, as well. It's affecting seniors at home. It's affecting curling clubs. It's affecting businesses. The 300% hydro rate increase since this government took power is too high, and 42% more in the next five years is unimaginable. People cannot pay these rates.

In northern Ontario, a lot of homes and a lot of apartments are still heated by hydro. At the door, you're hearing that sometimes the hydro rates are hundreds of dollars a month—\$700 or \$800 over two months. That is outrageous, so I am urging the government to include in their discussions of the budget more commitment to the Ring of Fire, getting her done, and more commitment to getting hydro rates down, and other expenses that people can't afford—auto insurance, gas for their cars, home heating. There has to be more concern for those who have to pay the bills.

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The Minister without Portfolio.

Hon. James J. Bradley: It was a very interesting speech, but it was riddled with inaccuracies, where we would dispute the facts that members put forward, honestly dispute those facts. The one thing I keep hearing from members of the Conservative Party is an apology for the federal Harper government. What we're looking for, I think unanimously in this House, is for people to stand up for Ontario and to defend Ontario's position within Confederation, particularly when we're being treated unfairly by the federal government. I look forward in future speeches from the member, and from other

members of the Conservative caucus, to hearing that defence of Ontario instead of the apologies for the Harper government.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I want to compliment the member for Nipissing. That was a good speech. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It's a real honour for me to stand today in this place on behalf of the people I represent in London West. I want to thank the member for Nipissing for his comments. Sometimes it's interesting, when you think about the different perspectives that each of us brings to the information that we have before us.

The member for Nipissing described this budget as a spending spree and talked about all of the buckets of money that the Liberals were planning to spend. Our concern, on this side of the House, is not about the spending that's included in the budget, but in terms of what that is actually going to mean for people in this province. The Liberals have committed to a 2.5% increase in spending, but when you look at inflation running at about 1.5%, and population growth expected to be about 1%, what we're actually seeing is a flatlining of spending.

Yesterday, we heard my colleague the member for Kitchener-Waterloo, our party's budget critic, talk about page 244 of the budget. It actually confirms a 6% cut to program spending. We know that that's really going to hurt the people we represent. In the election that we all just went through, I heard about electricity rates, absolutely, but I also heard about health care; I heard about people not being able to get the health care services that they relied on; I heard about wait-lists in emergency rooms; I heard about a lack of access to home care. What this budget includes is years of zero for hospital spending. That's going to hurt people in this province. This is an austerity budget, and New Democrats can't support it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Nipissing, you have two minutes to reply.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker. I do want to thank the members from Sudbury and London West, the Minister without Portfolio and the member from Wellington-Halton Hills for their words as well.

I know that it's tough to hear the facts. I know that it's tough to listen to the reports from Moody's and others. I know that it's awkward when the Auditor General comes out with a finding that is drastically different from what the government promised. I understand how hard it is to listen to the facts when they're presented. It's an opportunity for us to be able to speak about the Ontario that we want as well.

I do want to finish up by talking yet again about the Ring of Fire. It is just so very important to all of us. The member from Sudbury I know has been to the site. I too was at the site in Capreol, where Cliffs at one time was going to put the smelting facility. This is a wonderful

opportunity not only for Sudbury but for all of the north and for all of Ontario. The amount of business, the employment, the rail that would be built there—I've seen the site, where it's flat, where about nine tracks wide can be built to shuttle in and to shunt the chromite. I've seen the 4,000-acre parcel that they were looking at. It's perfect. It's a perfect opportunity to get this ore processed.

The bigger dream, Speaker, is that we don't just extract the ore, smelt it and ship it away, that we maybe dream a little bit bigger and talk about the possibility of making stainless steel here in Ontario. It needs three things: It needs ore, it needs nickel and it needs chromite. We mine all three in Ontario now, Speaker. So that's the bigger debate that I hope we have one day.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to speak in this Legislature.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? Further debate? Further debate?

There being none, Mr. Naqvi has moved second reading of Bill 14, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until after question period today.

Second reading vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Orders of the day?

Hon. James J. Bradley: No further business, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Seeing that there is no further business, this House stands recessed until 10:30 a.m.

The House recessed from 1006 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Todd Smith: I'd like to welcome some friends of mine from Belleville, who are visiting today: 11-year-old Logan James is in the members' gallery along with his mother, Danielle Barsotti, and his father, an old radio colleague of mine, Tommy James. And no, the Shondells are not visiting today.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Joining us today in the members' gallery are page captain Ayesha Mir's parents: Ms. Ajmal and Mr. Mir. Please stand up. There you are; nice to see you. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's my pleasure to welcome Matthew Boulden here to the Legislature. Matthew is an amazing campaign worker, and I thank him for all he has done.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: It's my pleasure to recognize my good friend Elliott Silverstein from CAA South Central Ontario, here with us in the members' gallery.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Today I'd like to introduce to the Legislature, in the members' gallery, Craig Stevens. Craig hails from Chatham. He's a passionate community

activist, and he helped knock on a lot of doors during the last election. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: It's my pleasure to introduce in the gallery today the Abraham family: Bibu Abraham, Mini Abraham and Athira Abraham. They are the father, mother and sister of Tania Abraham, who is serving as page captain today.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'm pleased to introduce two people from Children's Mental Health Ontario: Kim Moran and Gordon Dunning. Kim is the CEO and Gordon is the board chair of Children's Mental Health Ontario. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'd like to introduce Victoria and Christopher Ng, who are visiting us from Hong Kong today. They are seated in the east members' gallery. Welcome.

Hon. Reza Moridi: It's my pleasure and honour to introduce my friends and also my constituents: Karin Lynett and Carole Lundy, sitting in the members' gallery.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: It's my pleasure to introduce my friends from the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee, CJPAC. We have Rachel Chertkoff, the director of operations, here today; Laura Sohinki, director of outreach and programming; and interns Jordan Devon, Zane Colt and Greta Hoaken. Welcome.

Mr. Joe Cimino: I'd like to welcome, from Oshawa, Katherine Bowes, in the public gallery. She is the mother of page Ashley. Welcome.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: It's my pleasure to welcome Linda Sadvari, in the gallery, who is a family friend of our page from Etobicoke-Lakeshore, Gabriel Chemla. Welcome to the gallery. Gabriel is my neighbour from the Sunnylea neighbourhood.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I'd like to welcome, in the gallery today, a couple of great friends and great Liberals: Mary Ng and Gabriela Gonzalez. Please welcome them both.

M. Shafiq Qadri: J'ai le plaisir de vous présenter quelques-uns de nos invités: Bob Wood and Connie Choy, who are interested in our radon bill today.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Please welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario Ms. Barbara Heath, the mother of an outstanding press secretary at the Ministry of Finance, Susie Heath, joined together with Dr. Bill Tucker, a famed surgeon here in Ontario. Thank you both for attending.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's my pleasure to welcome to the House Julie Cayley, from Ducks Unlimited.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I'd like to welcome Andrew Sheppard, father of page Brendan Sheppard from Barrie.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Todd Smith: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. My question this morning is for the minister responsible for the Pan Am Games. Minister, in my hand I have the financial section of the TO2015 bid book. Nowhere in this

is there an actual line-by-line cost of the projects associated with the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games.

Your ministry and TO2015 officials keep promising that the projects are on budget and that they're on time, which is pretty easy to say when you don't provide a budget outlining the line by line for these costs. Your government really has no intention of being transparent.

Minister, where is the publicly available TO2015 budget so that taxpayers can actually see how much these games are going to cost them?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I want to thank the member opposite for this opportunity to really talk about the great things that are happening in Ontario, and especially the Pan Am Games that are taking place next year—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Finish, please.

Hon. Michael Coteau: As the member knows, these games are the most transparent games in the history of any sporting event in this country. In fact, these games are put under the freedom of information act. You can access that information through an FOI. We've had two technical briefings. In fact, both critics in the past have attended, I think, one of them. But we have had two technical briefings. We will go forward with another technical briefing very soon, before the fall hits. We're very proud of these games and—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Todd Smith: It's quite a statement. I'm sure the media would love to see the budget. I know taxpayers would love to see the line-by-line budget.

Minister, quite honestly, your excuses for the venues so far—we're talking about the Tim Hortons stadium, which is the new home of the Hamilton Tiger-Cats, eventually. It was late. It's not on time. It's not on budget. Your excuse for why it was late was because of winter. Here's a newsflash for you: We're building projects in Canada and winter does happen here.

Minister, in order to host these games you had to sign over 25 different memorandums of understanding with new or retrofitted venues. In this bid book it says that the venues are going to cost \$75 million. We know that the Hamilton stadium has cost over \$100 million. That's just one, by the way.

Will you commit to tabling all of the signed MOUs in the Legislature so that taxpayers—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I stand; you sit.

Minister?

Hon. Michael Coteau: What the member opposite won't tell you is that we are \$50 million under budget when it comes to our venues here in the province of Ontario. Thank you to Infrastructure Ontario for bringing us under budget. It's 10% under budget than what we originally—and, you know what? If you want to get into details about venues, let me go through a few of these venues.

Today, I'm so proud to announce that the aquatics centre at the Scarborough University of Toronto campus

is complete. It has officially been handed over and it is complete. In fact, that was slated for \$248.9 million. You know what the cost is? It's \$205 million.

I want you to stand up and join the rest of us on this side of the House, and Ontarians, and celebrate what we're doing when it comes to the Pan Am Games, because it is the largest multi-sport games in the history of not only this city or this province but this entire country and you should be proud.

Interjections.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Todd Smith: Mr. Speaker, the tryouts for the Toronto cheerleading teams were last week—last week. There's no reason to cheer about these games and everybody out there knows it.

Minister, let me remind you your government low-balled the Ornge cost—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Finish, please.

Mr. Todd Smith: Minister, your government low-balled the cost of Ornge. It took the Auditor General to get to the truth. You originally said the cost of the gas plant scandal was 5% of what the Auditor General showed the final cost as being.

Is it going to take calling in the Auditor General to find out how much these games are actually going to cost? You're not being open and you're not being transparent in sharing the actual cost of the games. Are you going to stall? Are you going to slap a final price tag on the games and then tell the people of Ontario that these games were on budget after it's too late to do anything about it?

Hon. Michael Coteau: Again, I have to say, we've had the most transparent games in the history of any sporting event in this entire country. We have had technical briefings on two occasions, and I think the opposition member who was responsible for the file before only attended one of the two. We will have another one, and I invite you to join me.

But let's go through this list of other events and see where they are. We have the athletic stadium at York University. It was originally budgeted for \$52.9 million. I can report that the cost is \$45.9 million. That's under budget.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition members will tell you when things are going bad, but they won't say when things are going good. These games are going well. We're under budget when it comes to our infrastructure. I think you should stand up and compliment this government for it.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, a chart prepared by your own min-

istry shows huge discrepancies between the funds given to the 72 school boards across Ontario to assist students with special needs. In my own riding, the Upper Grand District School Board and the Peel board of ed both receive some of the lowest funding per student at \$365 and \$339, compared to some boards receiving well over \$1,000.

Minister, we all understand that a student with a learning disability will need similar resources to succeed, regardless of where they live in Ontario. Can you please explain why there is such a massive variance in the resources allocated to students with special needs in different parts of the province?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek and the member from Eglinton–Lawrence will take their conversation somewhere other than this House.

Minister.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm very pleased to respond to the question. We are now spending \$2.5 billion on special education in this province. Special education is relatively unique in our funding model in that boards must spend all the money allocated for special-needs students on special education.

In fact, the vast majority of that money, the biggest chunk of that money, is allocated on a per pupil basis. You count the number of pupils in Upper Grand and allocate a per pupil amount. It's known as SEPPA, the special ed per pupil amount. The bulk of that \$2.5 billion is on a per pupil basis.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Minister, arguments like that don't hold water because Peel is getting \$300 and, there are boards that are getting \$1,600. It's not fair; it's not equitable. Regardless of where you live in Ontario, you should expect that your government will assist your child with a special need.

The Libs have been in power for more than a decade, and it's time that you take responsibility for the students languishing on these wait-lists. No amount of justification or talking or explanation can justify the current funding model, where a school board is given \$1,600 per student, while others, like students in the Dufferin and Peel region, receive less than 20% of that amount. Your budget doesn't address this inequity, and families are tired of being told that there are no resources to help their son or daughter with a special need.

When is this government going to admit there is a problem, and what steps are you taking to address the funding inequity?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Actually, the member has it wrong. The budget and the Grants for Student Needs do address this problem, which is that the high-needs amount has, in fact, been a subject of concern. We struck a working group. The working group, composed of special-needs and school administrator folks from all over the province, suggested a new funding model for the high-needs amount, and the budget this year—the Grants

for Student Needs, in fact, are implementing a gradual transition to a high-needs funding amount, which, I would point out, the chair of the Peel District School Board said is a great improvement, and thanked us for implementing a new funding model for a high-needs amount for special education.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I don't think parents and children with special needs are interested in a lecture; I think they're interested in some action. It's not in the budget. I've looked at it. You've talked about full-day learning. You have not talked about actually solving that inequity, where certain boards get over five times what other boards get.

Another waiting list that's plaguing children with special needs is access to assessment. As you know, a formal assessment is the key to receiving services that students need to thrive. It gives them a legal right to services, or a right to wait on another waiting list.

People for Education's 2014 report on special education includes quotes from principals who mention a three-year wait for an assessment. I have parents calling my office. They have to make a choice between waiting three years for board assessments or paying for private assessments at a cost of \$3,000. It's simply out of reach for most Ontario families.

Will you address the wait time for assessments, the wait time for services and funding inequities between boards?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I find it very surprising that the member opposite, having identified an issue, which was a difficult allocation of the high-needs amount, is saying, "Why don't you fix it?" when we point out that we are in the process of fixing it and, in fact, are in the process of implementing a new model for high needs; then turns around and says, "Well, that doesn't matter. I don't care." We're doing exactly what the member asked us to do, and the Peel District School Board has, in fact, said that we are addressing the problem that we identified. I don't know how on earth we make the member opposite happy when she identifies a problem and we're, in fact, fixing it.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier: Does the Premier think the LCBO headquarters and GM shares combined are worth \$3.15 billion?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: No, Mr. Speaker, it's not.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, the Premier's plan counts on at least \$3.15 billion from assets. The LCBO headquarters and the GM shares are worth significant sums, but certainly not \$3.15 billion, as the finance minister has just acknowledged.

The question is an obvious one: Where is the money coming from?

Hon. Charles Sousa: That's why we have Mr. Clark and the council doing their work, reviewing effectively and appropriately the values of our crown corporations, our assets and how we can—basically, we're talking about looking at those products that the member just spoke about, real estate and shares in companies where we're not getting the most productivity and the best value for our taxpayer, to do an asset swap, to find better ways to invest.

Would you rather have shares of GM that are there as a passive investor or would you rather we build a subway? Do you want us to have real estate holdings in downtown Toronto, or do you want us to build an LRT? Do you want us to have roads and bridges up in the north or do you want us to hold on to real estate in Hamilton, in your own riding? We are trying to make it more productive and more effective for the people of this province for the long term and for our prosperity.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Liberals are holding a blind auction where the public are the only ones who are being left in the dark. On the one hand, they already have an asking price of \$3.15 billion, and on the other hand, they won't tell the public what's for sale. Is it the LCBO? Is it Hydro One? Apparently, no one will say, but someone has clearly done the math. Why are the Premier and her finance minister refusing to tell Ontarians the whole story about their fire sale of public assets?

1050

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, we're not refusing to tell anything. We put it in the budget. We're making it clear that we're going to be reviewing assets. We're going to be reviewing the operations of our crown corporations. We're going to ensure that we maximize their value and provide greater dividends for the province of Ontario and for the taxpayer.

The council's principles are as follows: The public interest must remain paramount and protected; decisions must be aligned to maximize value for Ontarians; and the decision process will remain transparent, professional and independently validated.

What we want is to ensure that we're maximizing the value of the operations of our assets and ensure that we do better than we've been. You can put your head in the sand and pretend that there's no need, but there is. There's always a requirement for us to do more—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.
New question?

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next questions are to the Premier about Liberal promises, frankly. The Liberal plan is good news for auto insurance companies, but let's talk about what that means for families.

Yesterday, the Minister of Finance refused to commit to this year's target for getting auto insurance rates under control. If the Liberals can't keep their target this year, the question is: Can the Premier tell drivers whether they'll ever see the 15% savings in auto insurance rates?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The fact is that auto insurance rates, on average, are down more than 5%, and the leader of the third party's own candidates made comments during the election that they were getting better auto rates. The fact is we are on track. We have committed to a 15% reduction and had we been able to pass the legislation that would have taken further costs out of the system, we would be farther along. But we will reintroduce that legislation.

In terms of the impact of our budget on families, I think that the leader of the third party knows perfectly well that personal support workers will receive more money in wages as a result of our budget. The families of personal support workers will be supported. Child care modernization and investments in early learning will make an impact on people's lives.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Families are, in fact, wondering exactly what the Liberal plan does mean for them. There is a growing chorus of economists, editorialists and bond rating agencies who are raising red flags about the Liberals' ability to keep their promises and pay the bills. That puts important services in this province, like health care and education, at risk.

With this in mind, why does the Premier think now is the right time to open up new loopholes for CEOs to write off their luxury expenses in this province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Here's what I think it's time for: It's time for us to get our budget passed so that we can move on implementing \$2.5 billion in the Jobs and Prosperity Fund over the next 10 years to help businesses like Ubisoft, where I was this morning with the Minister of Economic Development and Employment and with the member for Davenport, which has created 330 jobs since 2010 by partnering with government.

I think it's time to invest \$130 billion in public infrastructure. I think it's time to invest \$11.4 billion in hospital expansions and redevelopments. I think it's time to start developing a made-in-Ontario retirement pension plan. It's time to increase the Ontario Child Benefit. It's time to invest \$810 million in developmental services, and it's time to expand low-income health benefits. All of that is in our budget, Mr. Speaker. It's time to implement those things.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the Liberals promised to make the tough choices, but the bottom line is that this budget opens up new loopholes for CEOs, while people who work hard every day and play by the rules are finding that life is getting harder and harder, instead of easier.

Is that what the Premier had in mind when she said "difficult choices" have to be made? How exactly diffi-

cult was it for this Premier to choose CEOs over everyday families?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, we clearly have not done that and the leader of the third party knows that. What we have done is we have brought back a budget to this Legislature that would put \$50 million in place for a new Local Poverty Reduction Fund. We've brought back a budget that, as I have said, would increase wages for personal support workers, would put new funding in place for long-term-care homes, would support in vitro fertilization funding, would expand mental health and addictions, would put in place a comprehensive aboriginal action plan and would invest billions in retrofits in our schools. That's what our budget has put forward. Those are the things that we will implement.

I know that the leader of the third party understands that and is looking for every reason not to support our budget, but there is a long, long list of reasons why she should be supporting it.

TENDERING PROCESS

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Minister of Labour. Minister, the labour board recently dismissed the region of Waterloo's appeal against the carpenters' union certification bid. Do you know what the defining evidence was in that case? The region fixed a toilet handle at an addiction centre and installed a sign at a bus station. Now the region is subject to the same labour rules as a private sector construction company and, as a result, the region is now locked into a labour monopoly.

Minister, nobody agrees that the system is fair; they know it's broken. That's why they now want the government to live up to its word and seriously consider fixing the labour act.

Minister, will you agree to work with me today to restore open tendering in the region of Waterloo?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I do thank the honourable member for the question. The OLRB has released its final decision in regard to the matter that they were dealing with, with the carpenters' union and Waterloo.

Mr. Speaker, as you know the OLRB is an independent, quasi-judicial tribunal that we use from time to time in this House. As such, it would be inappropriate for me to comment or to pass judgment on the decisions of the board. However, it's important to note that if the municipality is unsatisfied with the board's decision, they're able to reapply for classification as a non-construction employer. It's that simple. The municipality has rights to move ahead in the process, and I would expect that they would ascertain as to whether they will use those rights.

We know, for example, that non-construction employer classification was granted to the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board and the Independent Electricity System Operator as examples of where organizations have used the rights that they have to get the decision they would like to see.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Michael Harris: Minister, that's a horrible answer to a question, especially when you come into the

region of Waterloo. They've already gone through the process, Minister. They've already gone through the process, and they lost.

This isn't a political issue, because I can tell you that it isn't for the thousands of qualified tradespeople who have now been prevented from working on publicly funded infrastructure in the community where they live, work and pay taxes. This is an issue of fairness that hard-working men and women in my region want to see the government fix. They don't want to see their elected representatives stand by and allow a loophole in the Labour Relations Act to bar them from working on the very infrastructure that their taxes pay for.

Minister, wouldn't you agree that it's only fair to give all qualified tradespeople an equal opportunity to bid on public infrastructure?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: On this side of the House, we're very, very proud of our track record. We enjoy labour peace in the province of Ontario: About 97% of collective agreements are solved without any resort to strike or to job action at all.

But I'm not surprised that the member for Kitchener-Conestoga is unhappy with the OLRB's decision, because, in fact, what the parties did was they used the rules that were put in place by his party to reach this decision. This isn't something that was brought in by this government; this is something that was brought in by your government.

Certainly, if you made a mistake along the way, I'm open to suggestions as to how that might be fixed. But you've got to remember that these are rules that you brought in. You asked the parties to apply those rules. This is the ruling that has been handed down. If you have suggestions as to how we might correct what you obviously think is a mistake of yours, we'd be very, very happy to look at it.

HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France G  linas: Ma question est pour le ministre de la Sant   et des Soins de longue dur  e.

I think the minister will agree that patients need to be able to trust our health care system and providers. When things go wrong, they want the help of an independent third party that they can trust. But this government refuses to listen to patients, to their families and to health care workers. The Liberals' new patient ombudsman very clearly works for the health care system and reports to the minister. It will be perceived as bias by people who have lost faith in our health care system's ability to help them.

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Speaker, will the minister explain why truly independent oversight of our hospitals and long-term-care homes is so unacceptable to this government?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm glad to have another opportunity to say how excited I am about the proposed legislation that contains within it the creation of the position of the patient ombudsman. It's not a position that looks

across government and all sectors of society that are important to Ontarians. It's an individual, he or she, who will be solely responsible for looking at the health care sector, the needs of the patients, the clients, to make sure that individuals and their families are getting the best possible care we can provide. This is an individual who won't be housed within government—it would be in an agency of government, the most appropriate one, I believe, Health Quality Ontario—at arm's length to the government, producing an annual report which will be made public, and who will have, quite frankly, the powers that the Ombudsman has as well. The Ombudsman, I should add, has oversight of Health Quality Ontario, where this person resides.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: The minister says that the patient ombudsman will have the powers of the Ombudsman, but that's just not the case. The patient ombudsman, for example, does not accept complaints from family members or from MPPs, does not accept complaints from ambulance services, health units or homes for special care. It does not investigate decisions or recommendations. It needs a warrant or consent to enter a facility. And it is not an independent officer of this assembly.

Your decision is not based on evidence. It is not based on best practice. Why does the minister insist on saying the patient ombudsman is good enough for Ontarians when every other province and territory has Ombudsman oversight of their health care system?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm confident that we're actually doing something which is better than those other provinces and territories. It's an individual who is wholly focused on our health care system.

We actually based the legislation on the Ombudsman Act. We consulted with the Ombudsman on the creation of this position. Here's what the patient ombudsman will be able to do: will be able both to investigate in response to a complaint or initiate his or her own investigation. Like the Ombudsman, the patient ombudsman would have the ability to enter premises for the purpose of an investigation, and the ability to require the production of information and documents in connection with an investigation without entering a premise. Following an investigation, the patient ombudsman would be able to not only make recommendations to the CCAC, the LHIN and the hospital at issue, but also produce a report which is publicly available. As I mentioned, the Ombudsman, whom we consulted with for this position, will have oversight of Health Quality Ontario, which is where this individual will reside.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Ma question est pour le ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines, l'honorable Michael Gravelle.

I think this is an important question for the minister which has deep implications for Ontario's economic future, so I hope, Minister, that you will not give us a Trojan Horse response.

Our government has committed \$1 billion for the development of the Ring of Fire. Realizing this project's full potential will not only bring thousands of jobs to the north, even Etobicoke North, but will also have a real positive impact across Ontario. That's why getting this project right is essential. Bringing together different proposals from First Nations communities, key mining companies and different levels of government is needed to ensure this project's success.

My question is this: Can the minister please inform this House about the 60-day commitment to establish the Ring of Fire development corporation?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: A good question from the member for Etobicoke North. Thank you very much. Congratulations on your victory as well.

Our government is setting very tangible benchmarks so that we can drive smart, sustainable development forward in the Ring of Fire. That is why, as of July 3, when our government laid out our vision during the throne speech, we also marked the beginning of our 60-day commitment to establish a development corporation.

We recognize the need to facilitate the creation of a business structure that can align interests and advance strategic infrastructure development in the Ring of Fire in a way that benefits all Ontarians. All of our partners will make crucial infrastructure decisions for the Ring of Fire and utilize the \$1 billion we have committed.

Our government is going to continue to work with all of our partners to ensure that we meet that 60-day deadline, our next benchmark in this great project's development.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Thank you, Minister, for the update on the strategy and the initiatives. I think Ontarians appreciate and deserve a clear, sound strategic plan that will help realize this tremendous opportunity.

It was with some degree of astonishment, however, that I realized the approach that the third party was taking regarding the Ring of Fire. The NDP seemed to demonstrate their inability, perhaps even their incapacity, to provide sound economic policy. Speaker, their recent platform allocated zero dollars—nada, nothing, goose egg, bubkes—to the Ring of Fire. To be clear, it wasn't omitted from their platform. The NDP had one line item for the Ring of Fire, and it said “zero.”

I'm encouraged that our financial commitment of \$1 billion will help build the much-needed transportation infrastructure for this project.

The minister speaks about how benchmarking is important. Would he please inform this House about how some of our government's milestones in this essential area of economic development are proceeding?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: It is a great question and a very clear point about the very muddled platform commitment by the NDP, which wasn't really there.

Speaker, this is a complex project, but with the right mechanisms and the right benchmarks, we have and we will keep this project moving forward. Certainly, signing the historic landmark framework agreement with all nine

Matawa First Nations, and Premier Wynne was part of that, was a very significant achievement. Committing \$1 billion to the Ring of Fire infrastructure is another example of how we are driving this great project forward. May I say, Mr. Speaker, our 60-day commitment is but another example of our government's strategic approach to realizing this multi-generational economic project.

PAN AM GAMES

Mrs. Gila Martow: Mr. Speaker, I have another question to the minister responsible for the Pan Am Games. On CFRB this past week, I heard the minister say that he expects GTHA municipalities to reduce traffic congestion by 20% in anticipation of the Pan Am Games next summer.

Minister, you are punting responsibility to municipalities you've saddled with these games. By spending money on things like VIP lanes, you have lost an opportunity to invest in measures like synchronized traffic lights that would make a real impact on gridlock.

Will the minister tell this House why he has chosen a band-aid solution over a plan to improve the lives of millions of Ontarians?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I appreciate that—
Interjection.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Well, it is Pachi's birthday today. So happy birthday, Pachi. It's his first birthday. Congratulations, Pachi.

The Pan Am Games are going to be an incredible event. They're going to be broadcast to over 300 million people. We will have over 300,000 people come into the GTA and the Golden Horseshoe to celebrate our athletes, not only from Ontario but from right across Canada and from many countries in the Americas.

Obviously, we're going to have to invest a lot of time and energy into making sure we get our transit right, and I know the minister responsible for transportation would like to weigh in on this question. But we are going to bring a lot of excitement here to the province of Ontario, and we're going to do everything that we can to support them.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to have a lot of people from all around the world supporting us. In fact, the last time we had dignitaries come down, I remember the party opposite turned their back on those countries.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Minister, it's hard to get excited about going to see a game when you know you're not going to make it to the game because you're sitting in gridlock. I can't imagine how the athletes and officials are going feel.

Your government decided to host these games with no regard for the impact on families and commuters. Now you're telling the GTHA municipalities that they are on their own when it comes to gridlock for games you have said will be bigger than the Vancouver Olympics. You've chosen sky-high executive salaries over gridlock improvement measures.

Minister, will you apologize to the GTHA taxpayers for the transportation nightmare that is yet to come?

Hon. Michael Coteau: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank my colleague the minister responsible for the Pan Am Games for his opening response and also for his outstanding work on this file.

I have the pleasure of being the neighbouring MPP to the member who is asking this question, as someone who is proud to represent a York region riding.

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I think it's important to remember that the Ministry of Transportation, working in conjunction with the other ministries that are affected, has a very strong and robust plan to make sure that we are able to move not only our regular commuters around the GTHA, but also the athletes, all of the volunteers and everyone else who is associated with the Pan Am Games, around the entire games area in the most effective and efficient way possible.

I think, with about a year left until the games are actually taking place, it would make the most sense for members on all sides of this House to work with us, to work with stakeholders and to work with municipalities and partners to make sure that these games are as successful as they will be. I call on the member opposite to work with us on this.

MUNICIPALITIES

Ms. Cindy Forster: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Like many others, our province's mayors, regional chairs and councillors are struggling to understand a fundamental contradiction in this budget. On one hand, they're told that the funding to municipalities is going up, and yet, when you look at the actual budget, you find that it includes annual cuts of 6% per year to most ministries, in a group that includes Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The government cannot give and take away at the same time. Will the minister come clean and tell municipalities how much their programs will be cut?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Well, that's a great question. We on this side of the House pride ourselves on the relationship we've been able to develop with the 444 municipalities across Ontario. We continue to meet our uploading schedule, which neither of the other parties would commit to in the last election, and which is important to our municipal leaders.

But most important of all, we continue to dialogue with our partners at every opportunity. By the way, I'm pleased to stand in this House and say that the first thing that I'm going to do as the new minister is a tour I'm calling the "building bridges tour." We're going across Ontario to consult, over and above the AMO consultations, on issues of importance to our municipal partners in an effort to find out how we can work even more effectively together.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Table 2.19 on page 244 of the budget says something different. As the government decides how to cut 6% each year for three years, slashing budgets by a total of \$3 billion per year, history shows that municipalities are often an easy target.

As Brock University's Professor David Siegel pointed out yesterday, municipalities should be very worried with this budget. Almost 20 years ago, Mike Harris figured out that if he cut transfers to municipalities, forcing deep cuts to municipal programs, municipalities took the blame, not the province. Municipalities are still suffering those consequences.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister please tell us how much of the \$3 billion in cuts will be going to municipalities?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: We're continuing with the uploading, as all members of this House should know, and as our municipal partners expect and appreciate. We have a memorandum of understanding with the 444 municipalities, which they signed on to, and which defines the timing of the upload and how that's handled. They're happy with that.

We have since 2014, in fact, provided a combined benefit of over \$2 billion to municipalities. That's over three times the level that was in place in 2003. I think we've got a really good record and a good relationship with the municipalities, and I can pledge to the members of this House that that relationship will continue to improve under this government.

HEALTHY LIVING

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you very much, Speaker; it's great to be back. My question is for the Associate Minister of Health with responsibility for long-term care and wellness. I'd like to congratulate you on your appointment to cabinet.

It's finally summer here in Ontario and we're spending a lot more time outdoors, especially after that long, harsh winter that we just experienced. Now, many families in my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell are spending their weekends at the cottage. They're hiking or biking across our beautiful countryside, or they're finding a beach to play on or just relax on, or maybe they're just relaxing at home.

Being outdoors can and should be fun, but it also carries some risk. Families in GPR and across this province are wondering what they can do to protect their kids. Through you, Speaker, could the minister tell this House how families can enjoy the sun while staying safe?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Thanks to the very hard-working member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. I want to start by saying how pleased I am that his constituents are out there enjoying the summer and being active, and I hope he will be able to join them soon.

Our government is committed to keeping Ontarians healthy, and there is no better way to stay healthy than to be active and fit. And there's no better time in a cold country like ours to stay active and fit than in the summer. I urge all Ontarians to get out there and enjoy

the great outdoors: Canoe; go hiking; go swimming. This is especially important for our kids because we know intuitively, as parents and grandparents, that our kids are not as active as they should be. In fact, studies show that our kids are spending 62% of their time inactive, and we must do everything we can to get them active. But it's really important that they stay safe, and that's why we urge them to use helmets—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you, Minister, for that comprehensive and thoughtful answer.

With the growing problem of childhood obesity, I know how important it is for our kids to get out and play and exercise. Whether it's exploring a park, participating in sports or swimming in a pond or a pool or a lake, we should all be encouraging our children to be exploring Ontario's great outdoors.

I know some people love the rain, and so do I, but the minister spoke about protecting our kids from skin cancer. I know that's something that parents actually worry about. They make sure their children are using sunscreen and wearing light clothing to protect their skin from the sun and its harmful ultraviolet rays. But the sun isn't the only source of danger, Speaker. Through you, could the minister inform the House what else the government is doing to protect our children from skin cancer?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: The member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell is absolutely right. There's more than one way to increase one's chances of getting skin cancer. Tanning bed usage in particular presents a risk, especially for our young. The International Agency for Research on Cancer has shown the risk of developing skin cancer increases by 75% when tanning beds are used before the age of 35. That is why our government took action, passing legislation in October 2013 that will prevent young people from using tanning beds in Ontario. This came into effect, I'm happy to say, on May 1 of this year. This was very timely because previously, tanning bed use had been increasing, more than doubling between 2006 and 2012 for grade 11 and grade 12 students.

Now that we have this legislation, it's going to protect our kids from exposure to artificial ultraviolet radiation in tanning beds.

I'm just going to ask all of us to have a safe summer.

HOSPICE CARE

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, over three years ago I first stood in this House to raise an important issue about the discrepancy between how hospices are funded in Ontario. I have since raised this issue with your government several times and yet nothing seems to be happening. If you look at my riding, the north end hospice receives funding from their LHIN, while the south end hospice has been told that the LHINs don't fund residential hospices at all.

Minister, hospices are there for those who require treatment at the end stages of life. The alternative for

many people is to stay in the hospital at a much higher cost. In fact, the cost can be upwards of 10 times more expensive. An intensive care bed, as you know, averages close to \$3,000 per day in a hospital, while a hospice bed averages between \$300 to \$500.

Minister, you have a clear opportunity to save taxpayers some money by supporting hospices across the province. Will you do that?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We do support hospices across this province. In fact, we were the first government to invest in hospices. We want to be sure that, at this important moment in an individual's and their families' and friends' life, Ontarians have dignity through their final days.

We have now committed to a palliative and end-of-life strategy, and myself along with the associate minister will be working on that as we go forward. It was referenced in our platform as part of this plan. In fact, we're committing to funding 20 more hospices across the province, almost doubling the number of people in Ontario who will have access to this high-quality end-of-life care. It's important. It builds on an earlier end-of-life strategy from 2005, which at that time was a \$115-million program to provide that dignity and that important support, that quality health care, to those individuals who so badly and so importantly deserve it.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Thank you for that answer, Minister. You might want to adjust your number; I think it's 22 of the 35 hospices that actually receive nothing from government. The 13 that do receive limited funding just for the nursing and personal support costs. So all of the capital, as you know, is fundraised by the local community.

In fact, I wish you'd talk to the Central LHIN, because Matthews House Hospice in Alliston runs four beds. They run them completely without funding at all from the government, one of the 22. The attitude that the LHIN has taken there is, "How dare you go ahead and build a hospice and not have government approval ahead of time or government funding in place?" What a horrible attitude the ministry has. They should be thanking the people for raising millions of dollars, for putting the four beds in place and for covering the up to \$650,000-a-year operating cost. Eighty people have gone through there. The average length of stay is 10 days. According to the formula, that's \$2 million you save in health care dollars by supporting the hospice. So will you support Matthews House?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I thank the member opposite. In fact, he's making a good argument for supporting what we've proposed in the budget and our platform, which is developing a specific palliative and end-of-life strategy across the province. It's important not only that the system works better, but we want an overarching provincial policy framework when it comes to this end-of-life care. It's so important that we not do it—I'm not suggesting that in this instance this is the case, but it can't be

on an ad hoc basis. It needs to be very proactive. It needs to engage members of the community. It needs to have a provincial policy, which is the foundation of how we engage individuals in support. But the reality is that we're investing significantly more money. It's in our platform. We will be finding ways to implement that going ahead.

We're going to be basing it in part on a very important working group that was set up just last December, the residential hospice working group, which is consulting widely and is going to be providing us with the recommendations that we need to develop that important strategy for residential hospices as well as the other palliative care.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Michael Mantha: Mr. Speaker, good morning to you. You should try to smile a little bit more. It's not becoming of you, having that long pout on you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Only the members can make me smile.

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question is directed to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Minister, your government promised during the election to establish a Ring of Fire development corporation within 60 days of assuming government, just like you promised during the election that you would go ahead and invest a billion dollars into the Ring of Fire, with or without a commitment from the federal government to match the funds, even though your budget said that the billion dollars was contingent on the feds buying in.

Well, Minister, which is it? Will you go ahead and invest a billion dollars into the Ring of Fire regardless of whether the feds sign on or not? The people of northern Ontario deserve to know.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I appreciate the question. Indeed, we have been very clear. The Premier was very clear during the campaign and we are very clear now that the \$1-billion commitment is indeed locked in place. We are going to move forward with this project. We've made a number of significant amendments, including moving forward with our 60-day commitment in terms of forming a development corporation.

But that is not to say that we should not be putting pressure on and expecting the federal government to match our billion-dollar commitment. The fact is that we want to realize the full potential of this extraordinary project, which includes community access, and indeed I would call on all members of the opposition, but certainly those on the official opposition side, to support our call on the federal government to match our dollars.

Our commitment is in place, as is our commitment to move forward on the development corporation and the great work that we're doing with First Nations, particularly the Matawa First Nations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Once again to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines: I'm glad to hear that

the minister now knows when his government's 60-day commitment to creating the Ring of Fire development corporation begins. Yesterday, the minister confessed he wasn't sure when the 60-day guarantee actually begins. He admitted he wasn't clear whether it was 60 days from being sworn in as minister or 60 days from the throne speech.

The minister then went on to say that the development corporation would be set up by the end of the summer. I have been asking for a briefing on this plan but have been told it was premature. Will you commit to a date to when the people of the north will see a development corporation up and running? Minister, it's day 14: tick, tick, tick.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Again, I appreciate the question, although it is coming a little bit late in question period. We confirmed earlier in question period that indeed July 3 was when the clock started ticking, so to speak, towards the 60-day deadline. We are going to meet that commitment and work with our partners to meet that commitment.

But it's a little ironic coming from a party that, during the campaign, put support for the Ring of Fire in their platform, and with that platform commitment was zero dollars. For you to be speaking about us not being sure about deadlines or timelines—we're committed to the \$1 billion. We call on the federal government to match those dollars. We're committed to our 60-day establishment of the Ring of Fire development corporation as of July 3. It started that date—that timing.

Indeed, we're committed to continue to work extremely closely with the Matawa First Nations through the negotiations on a regional process with the Ring of Fire. This is a great, exciting project. We need the support of everyone in the Legislature to make this project happen.

SENIOR CITIZENS

Mr. Yvan Baker: My question today is for the minister responsible for seniors. Mr. Speaker, as many of us in this Legislature know, the number of seniors in Ontario is growing at a significant rate. In fact, the number of seniors over 65 is projected to double by the year 2036. This shift in demographics offers opportunities but it also offers challenges. In my riding of Etobicoke Centre we have one of the largest proportions of seniors of any riding in Ontario, so the services that our government provides are critically important not only to seniors but to their families in the community.

Many of the seniors I have spoken to in Etobicoke Centre have asked where they can find more information about the services available to them, whether they be for recreational activities, life-long learning possibilities or health care options, to help improve their daily quality of life.

Would the minister explain how this government is helping seniors to access the information they need to continue to be active members of their communities?

Hon. Mario Sergio: Mr. Speaker, this is the first chance I have to congratulate you on your reappointment.

I also wish you a very healthy and long life. I know you want to smile, but it is because, at the end of your term, Speaker, you will be the longest-serving Speaker of the House. I have to say congratulations on that, too.

As well, I want to congratulate the wonderful people of Etobicoke Centre for electing such an energetic representative. I know that he will serve the people of Etobicoke very, very well.

Speaker, we know that we have a lot of seniors today and we're going to have a lot of seniors tomorrow. We don't have to go as far as 2036. We need to look at 2016-17 to know that we will have more people over the age of 65 than under the age of 14. We have the guide to programs for seniors, which is a wonderful document, and I will add to it in my supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Thank you to the minister for that response. I know that the guide that the minister refers to covers a range of topics. I also know that it's written in a variety of languages to make it as accessible as possible. I think it's important that it gets into the hands of people in our community in Etobicoke Centre and across Ontario. Can the minister please take his time in the supplementary to expand on what's in that guide? I think this would be to the benefit of my constituents in Etobicoke Centre that they understand what's contained in it—and to communities across Ontario.

Hon. Mario Sergio: Again, I have to say thank you to the member because he's on top of a very important issue that is also an issue important to the people of Etobicoke Centre.

The guide's new format is very user-friendly. On top of the English and French languages, thanks to the wonderful work of the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat we have managed to produce and deliver—make it available—in another 14 languages, including Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Gujarati, Italian, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tamil, Urdu and Vietnamese.

Speaker, the guide is extremely well received. It contains a lot of information about active living, caregiving, transportation, housing and a lot more. It also includes a key contact section with phone numbers of which seniors can avail themselves.

This is one of the plans that will continue to make Ontario the best place where seniors can age in.

1130

PENSION PLANS

Mrs. Julia Munro: My question is to the Premier. Premier, why is Ontario the only province to believe that the creation of a provincial pension plan is the best way for people to save for retirement? No other province or government thinks this is a good idea. Prince Edward Island is the latest province to back out of supporting your proposed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan.

Premier, at a time when businesses and families are struggling to stay afloat, why are you increasing payroll taxes and decreasing take-home pay?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the associate minister responsible for the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will want to speak to the supplementary, but I really need to say that it is very important that the member opposite understand—and I think she does—that our first choice all along would have been to have had the Canada Pension Plan enhanced. We agree with provinces across the country that that is what should have happened. But the federal government—Stephen Harper would not engage in that conversation. He said that he wasn't interested. He did not want to do what every province across the country wants, which is to negotiate a new and enhanced Canada Pension Plan.

If the member opposite has a way into the hearts of the federal government, her federal cousins, we would be more than happy to work with the federal government. But in the absence of that leadership, we're going to stand up for the retirement security of the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I would just say that the federal government understands how to answer the question about increasing payroll taxes and decreasing take-home pay.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business says the new pension will hurt small and medium-sized businesses that simply cannot afford to make the employer contributions, and says that this plan will kill, not create, jobs.

Ontario is the only province moving forward with this job-killing plan. Why are you making it harder for Ontario businesses and families to survive?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Associate Minister of Finance, with responsibility for the pension plan.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I would like to thank the member opposite for the question and congratulate her on her critic role for pensions.

You've asked a very important question of why: Why do we need to create a made-in-Ontario retirement pension plan? The simple fact of the matter is that people are not saving enough for retirement. We cannot put our population at risk by not taking action now.

The fact of the matter is CPP is inadequate to meet the needs of retirees, capping out at \$12,500. In fact, the average in Ontario is \$6,800, and that is not enough income to sustain people. The fact of the matter is two thirds of people are without a workplace-based pension plan, so those means are not enough as well.

We are moving forward in Ontario and providing an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan so people can retire with adequate income security.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Minister of Education. On Tuesday, the minister said she was "delighted" that they started to talk to boards about how they can make use of school space. The members of the local community group CARE have a plan to work with

the not-for-profits, groups like the Boys and Girls Club and the United Way, to create a new community hub and to keep their school open.

Will the minister be delighted to listen to the community of Niagara-on-the-Lake and ensure that this government invest in keeping Parliament Oak school open?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I think we need to back up a little bit, because what I think the member is obliquely asking me is, will I overturn a decision by the board to close the school? In fact, I have no legal authority to overturn a decision by a board to close a school. It is the fact that during NDP government, during PC government, during Liberal government, the Education Act has always given the local school board the exclusive authority over the ability to close a school. So if what he's asking me is if I have the authority to overturn a decision that has already been made, the answer is actually no.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Minister, in your own budget it says that the government will recognize the importance of schools in small communities. But at the same time, your budget seems to focus on a plan to close schools more than anything else. This budget lays out a specific plan to use \$750 million to close schools but doesn't have a program to keep them open.

Will the minister promise to take action on the importance of small community schools and set aside a committed fund to keep schools open, like Parliament Oak?

Hon. Liz Sandals: That's a different question because in fact our budget does have in it a dedicated fund for the community use of schools. But that is a fund that would be based on application only. The school board would have to apply to the government for that community use as part of a business plan. It is not intended to suddenly give me the authority to overturn. But certainly, if a board comes forward and says, "We have a plan here that is a plan to transition us to community use of a particular building," then absolutely, there is funding in the budget to engage in that conversation. But the board needs to approach the ministry with that as part of their plan.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Premier, on a point of order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, it came to my attention earlier this week that one of the respected members of the press gallery, Richard Brennan, celebrated his 40th wedding anniversary—he and Vickie celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary.

We want to collectively congratulate Richard and Vickie Brennan, who were married on July 13, 1974, in Ingersoll, Ontario. They have two children, Andrew and Kelly. Kelly was married just a couple of days after the election. Congratulations to her. They have two grandkids, Mason and Audrey.

They met in Ingersoll. They had their first date at a Christmas party in 1972. He worked at the paper and she worked at the bank. I just want to say that all of us want to especially congratulate Vickie.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Algoma-Manitoulin asked me if there was a reason for me to smile. This is it, and it's for Vickie.

I have to say, that's not a point of order but I'm sure that all of us share the joy of Richard and Vickie.

DEFERRED VOTES

BUILDING OPPORTUNITY AND SECURING OUR FUTURE ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2014

LOI DE 2014 OUVRANT DES PERSPECTIVES ET ASSURANT NOTRE AVENIR (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 14, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts / Projet de loi 14, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1138 to 1143.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Would all members take their seats, please.

On July 16, Mr. Naqvi moved second reading of Bill 14. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMeekin, Ted
Anderson, Granville	Fraser, John	Meilleur, Madeleine
Baker, Yvan	Gravelle, Michael	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoggarth, Ann	Moridi, Reza
Ballard, Chris	Hoskins, Eric	Murray, Glen R.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hunter, Mitzie	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Bradley, James J.	Jaczek, Helena	Naqvi, Yasir
Chan, Michael	Kiwala, Sophie	Oraziotti, David
Chiarelli, Bob	Kwinter, Monte	Potts, Arthur
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Marie-France	Qaadri, Shafiq
Coteau, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Rinaldi, Lou
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Sandals, Liz
Damerla, Dipika	Malhi, Harinder	Sergio, Mario
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Delaney, Bob	Martins, Cristina	Vernile, Daiene
Dhillon, Vic	Matthews, Deborah	Wong, Soo
Dickson, Joe	Mauro, Bill	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dong, Han	McGarry, Kathryn	Zimmer, David
Duguid, Brad	McMahon, Eleanor	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Munro, Julia
Arnott, Ted	Gretzky, Lisa	Nicholls, Rick
Bisson, Gilles	Hardeman, Ernie	Pettapiece, Randy
Campbell, Sarah	Harris, Michael	Sattler, Peggy
Cimino, Joe	Hatfield, Percy	Singh, Jagmeet
Clark, Steve	Horwath, Andrea	Smith, Todd
Elliott, Christine	Hudak, Tim	Tabuns, Peter

Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
Forster, Cindy
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne

Jones, Sylvia
MacLeod, Lisa
Mantha, Michael
Martha, Gila
Miller, Paul

Taylor, Monique
Thompson, Lisa M.
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 56; the nays are 36.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated July 16, this bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1147 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

EVENTS IN CHATHAM-KENT-ESSEX

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's always a pleasure to rise in this House, and it's also my pleasure to highlight two local festivities that are taking place this weekend in the great riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex.

First up is the cherry festival in Blenheim. Celebrating the greatest cherries in Ontario, the festival is a point of pride for Blenheim residents and it attracts guests from far and wide.

The highlight of the festival is, in fact, the cherry pit spit. I'm proud to say that I have participated in this competition in the past. Last year's champion won with a spit of 18.92 metres. I won't tell you what my personal best was, but I can give some pointers to any members interested in this Legislature if they'd like to come down and participate. In addition to the cherry pit spit, there's all-day shopping, music and dancing and the best cherry pie-eating contest in the whole province.

There's plenty more excitement in my riding this weekend with the second annual Shrewsbury Ribs n Blues Festival. Last year's event was a huge success, and they're back for more.

If you're a fan of fall-off-the-bone ribs and a little bit of that smooth jazz and blues and enjoying a cold beverage under a warm, summer sky, then this festival is for you. Co-lining will be the Howling Diablos and the Groove Council, both from the Detroit area.

Once again, I invite all members of the Legislature to come down to the great riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex for another weekend full of fun festivities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Smooth.
The member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

MUSEUMS

Mr. Michael Mantha: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know you're looking forward to hearing my summer

send-off speech, but this is not the one. Hopefully, we'll be here a little while longer so I can deliver it.

Over the next few months, I encourage Ontarians to get out and visit their local community museums as well as to stop in to museums across the province while vacationing. Museums are critical and necessary for helping to build healthy, vibrant communities.

Through museums, we are able to have an appreciation and understanding of our connections to natural and cultural history. They provide a unique, interactive experience of getting up close to things we usually only see in books, newspapers or on TV.

Last week, I had the opportunity to attend St. Joseph Island Museum for their annual tea. During this great family event, they unveiled their new commemorative plaque and paid tribute to the Algoma Dairyman's Association, as well as the 80th anniversary of the Algoma Ploughman's Association. Founded in 1963 by the historical society, St. Joseph Island Museum now has over 7,000 artifacts, covering over 200 years of island history.

Algoma-Manitoulin has too many community museums to list, which highlight the rich culture in history in their region. You can always visit Museums Ontario online to find out museums and cultural events across the province.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to returning to Algoma-Manitoulin and spending time with my family at many of these museums and at fun events across my riding.

URBAN HERO AWARDS

Mr. Yvan Baker: I'm proud to stand in the House today to congratulate 25 remarkable individuals and organizations in Etobicoke who were recently honoured with the Etobicoke Guardian's Urban Hero Awards.

The Urban Hero Awards recognize residents who have made a difference in our community in Etobicoke and Etobicoke Centre and make our communities a better place to live, and I'd like to mention those people in the House today:

- Dolores Ellerker for expanding Etobicoke Services for Seniors;

- The George Hull Centre for Children and Families for providing critical services to families in crisis;

- Brenda Siddall for two decades with Lakeshore Arts;

- Karl Sprogis for launching the youth mentorship program UrbanNoise;

- David Pritchard and Madeleine Pengelley of Birds and Beans Coffee;

- Inessa O'Hara for her business, the Royal House of Music;

- Ellen and Eric Johnstone for 37 years with the Mighty 4th Humber West Scouts;

- Olga Clarke for her volunteer work with St. Paul the Apostle Anglican Church;

- Delia Feijo for her work as an instructor and administrator at Islington Community School;

- Ralph MacDonald for pitching in around his neighbourhood;

- Cleo Simmonds with Ernestine's Women's Shelter;
- Dr. Laurie Green for her work as a parent advocate at the TDSB;

- Keith Hoare for work with students at Thistleton Collegiate;

- Nicki Mazzuca for helping create eco-friendly programs at Rivercrest Junior School;

- Stanley Roszak for helping students build and tend gardens at Bishop Marrocco secondary school;

- seven members of the Toronto Police Service's Somali Liaison Unit; and

- the Faustina Fury minor atom select hockey team for raising \$4,800 to fund research at SickKids Hospital.

Thank you, Etobicoke Guardian, for recognizing these important individuals, and congratulations to the winners. Thank you for your contributions to our community in Etobicoke and in Etobicoke Centre.

CANADIAN PLOWING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I have the pleasure to announce that on August 14, 15 and 16 in Thorndale, the Canadian Plowing Championships will occur. Thorndale is in Middlesex county, which is part of my riding, and I am proud to have been a part of the opening ceremonies yesterday.

In 2010, Elgin county held the International Plowing Match, which was a huge success.

Over the past two years, I've learned how to plow my own furrow at the Elgin plowing match—however, not too straight, but I am able to beat MP Joe Preston every time at the helm.

I'd like to thank groups like the Canadian Plowing Organization, which allows Canadians to preserve the art and skill of plowing. It is a fun and exciting way to keep our rural and agricultural roots alive, teaching Canadians the importance of good farming practices and the importance of things like farm productivity and yield efficiency.

I'd like to thank all the volunteers who are working together to ensure this event becomes possible. Their hard work and dedication make events such as this a success.

I'd like to thank the landowners, Anna and George Taylor at Purple Hill Farms, who have volunteered their land to be used over three days, next month, to ensure a successful event.

The winners of this event get to go to Denmark for the world championship.

I wish all the competitors well, and of course I'm rooting for the hometown Elgin-Middlesex-London people.

EVENTS IN OSHAWA

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm pleased to have this opportunity to highlight some of the dynamic events that have been happening in Oshawa this summer and to share some upcoming events.

Oshawa's Fiesta Week is an annual week-long multicultural family festival that showcases international

cultures and foods at pavilions and cultural clubs across the city. The 40th annual Fiesta Week in June was a great success and was proudly sponsored by the Oshawa Folk Arts Council.

At Memorial Park, in June, the eighth annual Métis Heritage Celebration hosted over 1,500 guests. Highlights included Métis history, arts and culture, storytelling and family activities.

Annually, Canada Day at Lakeview Park in Oshawa draws crowds of 30,000 to 50,000. We celebrated our nation's 146th birthday with fantastic live local entertainers, vendors, tournaments and fireworks.

Oshawa will be hosting boxing and weightlifting at the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games, and we marked the one-year countdown and are looking forward to hosting international athletes and competition right in our own backyard, at our very own General Motors Centre.

Oshawa also hosted the first annual Durham Craft Beer Festival, hosted by Buster Rhino's. There was a huge turnout to this new event highlighting 12 craft breweries. Cheers to a great new summer event in Oshawa.

The 21st annual Autofest will draw auto enthusiasts from all over the province to share in our city's rich automotive history and passion, August 22 through 24.

This is just a sample of summer in Oshawa. Enjoy free Concerts in the Park through August, and Doors Open Oshawa, and don't miss the Rotary Club's 13th annual ribfest, September 5 through 7.

I'm proud to represent and enjoy Oshawa, a city with so much to offer and celebrate.

CAMBRIDGE HIGHLAND GAMES

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I ask all members: What's shriller than the skirl of a bagpipe, flashes more leg than Marilyn Monroe and flips more logs than Paul Bunyan? Why, laddies and lassies, it's the 39th Cambridge Highland Games, going on July 18 and 19.

Celebrations start in style this Friday evening with—what else?—a ceilidh. To non-Scots, that's a Scottish pub night in the tradition of a Gaelic social gathering with music and dancing, featuring the band British Beat 66. They play the music that formed the British Invasion of the 1960s: the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and Herman's Hermits.

On Saturday, the gates open early, with a highland dancing competition, Scottish pipe bands, caber tossing, an 1812 re-enactment, a sheepdog demonstration and a display of Scottish cattle.

The annual Cambridge Highland Games were first held in 1975, but were originally founded by Scottish immigrants Janet and Duncan MacLachlan. Scottish settlers helped establish the communities that make up Cambridge, leaving behind their proud legacy of beautifully crafted stone heritage architecture, culture and music.

Since their beginnings, the Cambridge games have attracted thousands of visitors, welcomed warmly by the friendly folks in my great riding of Cambridge, bringing us together in a celebration of Scottish dancing, piping

and, of course, sport. I invite all members to visit Cambridge this weekend to discover your inner Scottishness.

1310

ELECTORAL REFORM

Mr. Steve Clark: I rise on an issue fundamental to our democracy: the ability of Ontarians to cast a ballot. I'll be writing every MPP to seek their support in demanding Elections Ontario clean up its voters list and fix the terrible job it does ensuring Ontarians know when and where to vote.

I can stand for an hour and list the nightmarish stories I heard from voters at the door during the campaign and the frustrated calls on election day or in the days after. But one incident sums up the experience for too many people in my riding and across the province. On June 11, I attended an event with about 50 seniors. In the room, the overwhelming majority hadn't received a voter's card and had no idea where to vote. This was a day before the election—one day before. If I hadn't been there to help, I'm sure many would have stayed home or showed up at the wrong polling station. That's a disgrace. I'm calling on the Chief Electoral Officer to investigate why this problem gets worse every election, not better, and to explain how he will fix it.

I don't blame local returning officers. I don't blame them. In fact, if Elections Ontario officials in Toronto actually listened to those returning officers, we could solve a lot of these problems.

Canadian soldiers have spilled too much blood giving us the freedom to vote for us to stand by and allow our democratic rights to be eroded because Elections Ontario didn't do their job. As MPPs, we have a duty to demand better.

CAROLYN KHAN

Mr. Vic Dhillon: I rise in this House to congratulate my good friend Carolyn Khan on winning the 2014 Pharmacist of the Year from the Ontario Pharmacists Association. This award is presented to a pharmacist who has demonstrated outstanding achievement in all areas of pharmacy practice.

Ms. Khan has had a glorious career as a pharmacist spanning over 30 years. While working for the Wise Elephant Family Health Team and at the North Peel Family Health Team, she was instrumental in implementing and evolving comprehensive structured smoking cessation programs, and currently she's the owner and operator of Queen Lynch Pharmacy in Brampton.

According to her, the most valuable lesson she has learned while working with palliative and oncology patients is that while she could not save or cure patients, she could at least hold their hands and walk their journey with them by providing seamless care for both patients and their caregivers.

As a strong believer in personal and professional development, Ms. Khan has attended the Institute of Applied Medicine and the college of naturopathic medi-

cine. She received a certificate in learning essential approaches to palliative and end-of-life care and completed numerous programs on the topics of diabetes and of tobacco addiction. Recently, she became a STOP practitioner for the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

I would again like to congratulate Carolyn on this prestigious award and for her hard work and dedication. Way to go, Carolyn.

RALLY FOR THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

Mr. Mike Colle: Last night, I joined hundreds of members of my own community at Beth Tzedec synagogue. I know the member Gila Martow from Thornhill was there with me, too. We were there as many members of the Jewish community were praying for the safety of their relatives back in Israel, who are being attacked by thousands of rockets that have been launched indiscriminately at Israel by the Hamas terrorists.

The rally for Israel at Beth Tzedec synagogue was hosted by the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, and Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl was the host. We heard renditions of O Canada and Hatikvah by world-famous Cantor Simon Spiro. We were hooked up via Skype with a large crowd in Ottawa to hear Minister John Baird and MP Marc Garneau speak in support of the people of Israel's right to defend themselves.

The community came together to pray for peace and show support for the people of Israel's need to be protected against these indiscriminate attacks by these terrorists.

I hope—and I hope you will join me in praying—that these hostilities will end, that this terrorist warfare will come to a stop and that the people of Israel can live in peace and security, free from these attacks by the Hamas terrorists.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I do have just a short announcement: Due to a special circumstance that is positive—it's not negative—five of our pages will be having their last day today, so I want to say to the five pages, thank you very much for your service to the Legislature.

Applause.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

RYAN'S LAW (ENSURING ASTHMA
FRIENDLY SCHOOLS), 2014

LOI RYAN DE 2014 POUR ASSURER
LA CRÉATION D'ÉCOLES
ATTENTIVES À L'ASTHME

Mr. Yurek moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 20, An Act to protect pupils with asthma / Projet de loi 20, Loi protégeant les élèves asthmatiques.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you, Speaker. I'll be brief.

Basically I'm re-announcing my bill, Ryan's Law, which should have passed last session but did not. It basically allows students within our school system to be allowed to have their relief medication inhalers on them at all times. It also provides for an emergency plan throughout the school system, so that everybody is educated on the use of asthma medication to know what to do in case of an emergency.

This bill will protect our students within our school system and provide relief for our parents at home, knowing that their children are safe and have their medication on them at all times, including on walks home and on their bus rides to and from school.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: That, notwithstanding standing order 98(a), private members' public business shall not be considered on Thursday, July 24, 2014.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I have a petition which has been signed by several thousand members of my community, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the city of Brampton held the highest rate of population growth among Canada's 20 largest cities in 2011;

"Whereas the creation of university campuses in an underserved area like the city of Brampton gives more students a full range of high-quality education in their community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario create Sheridan University and as well encourage the development or

expansion of a graduate and research-intensive institution in to Brampton.”

Mr. Speaker, I sign it and give it to page Gabriel to bring it down to the Clerk.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas household electricity bills have skyrocketed by 56% and electricity rates have tripled as a result of the Liberal government’s mismanagement of the energy sector;

“Whereas the billion-dollar gas plant scandal, wasteful and unaccountable spending at Ontario Power Generation and the unaffordable subsidies in the Green Energy Act will result in electricity bills climbing by another 35% by 2017 and 45% by 2020;

“Whereas the soaring cost of electricity is straining family budgets, particularly in rural Ontario, and hurting the ability of manufacturers and small businesses in the province to compete and create new jobs; and

“Whereas home heating and electricity are essential for families in rural Ontario who cannot afford to continue footing the bill for the government’s mismanagement;

1320

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately implement policies ensuring Ontario’s power consumers, including families, farmers, and employers, have affordable and reliable electricity.”

I’m pleased to affix my signature and send the petition to the table with page Zahra.

ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have a petition sent by people from across Ontario to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

“Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

“Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

“Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

“Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research.”

I am pleased to affix my name to the top and send this to the Clerk with Daniel.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Mrs. Cristina Martins: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas it is absolutely crucial that more is done to provide Ontarians retirement financial security which they can rely on;

“Whereas the federal government has refused to partner with our government to ensure that Ontarians have a secure retirement plan;

“Whereas more than three million Ontarians rely on the Canada Pension Plan alone, that currently does not provide enough to support an adequate standard of living;

“Whereas the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will provide the safe and stable retirement that Ontarians need;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That all members of the Ontario assembly support a plan to move forward with an Ontario-made pension retirement plan that will provide a financially secure retirement for Ontarians.”

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to affix my name to this petition and hand it over to Ayesha.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Michael Mantha: I present this petition on behalf of residents in the Goulais River-Sault North area.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario;

“Whereas we, the customers of Algoma Power, are being charged astronomical costs referred to as ‘delivery fees’;

“Whereas we, the customers of Algoma Power, would like the ‘delivery fees’ looked into and regulated so as to protect the consumer from big businesses gouging the consumer;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Stop Algoma Power's influx of fees for delivery and stop the onset of increasing these fees another 40% within four years."

I agree with this petition, Mr. Speaker, and present it to page Brendan, who will bring it down to the table, to the Clerks.

CHILDHOOD APRAXIA OF SPEECH

Mr. Mike Colle: Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here that was compiled by David and Lisa Brennan from Mississauga. It was done for their son Matthew.

"Petition to Designate May 14 as Apraxia Awareness Day in Ontario.

"Whereas childhood apraxia of speech is a rare neurological speech disorder that affects oral motor planning;

"Whereas an estimated 3% to 5% of the world's childhood population are diagnosed with childhood apraxia of speech;

"Whereas Ontario has excellent speech-language centres and programs that currently provide treatment for childhood apraxia of speech;

"Whereas children diagnosed in Canada with childhood apraxia of speech are eligible to receive the children's disability tax credit to assist with therapy costs;

"Whereas greater public awareness of speech disorders and the benefits of early intervention speech-language therapy are needed in the province of Ontario;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to join the United States of America in declaring May 14 as Apraxia Awareness Day" in the province of Ontario.

I'm totally in support of this, and I'm going to sign my name to these wonderful petitions from Mississauga.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have a petition signed by people right across Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

I fully support this petition. I will sign my name to it and present it with page David to the Clerk.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I have a petition on planning for Ontario's future.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is absolutely crucial that more is done to provide Ontarians retirement financial security which they can rely on;

"Whereas the federal government has refused to partner with our government to ensure that Ontarians have a secure retirement plan;

"Whereas more than three million Ontarians rely on the Canada Pension Plan alone, that currently does not provide enough to support an adequate standard of living;

"Whereas the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will provide the safe and stable retirement that Ontarians need;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario assembly support a plan to move forward with an Ontario-made pension retirement plan that will provide a financially secure retirement for Ontarians."

I will put my name to this and I will hand it to page William.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

Mr. Michael Mantha: This petition comes from a variety of sources across northern Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas a motion was introduced at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads 'that in the opinion of the House, the operation of off-road vehicles on highways under regulation 316/03 be changed to include side-by-side off-road vehicles, four-seat side-by-side vehicles, and two-up vehicles in order for them to be driven on highways under the same conditions as other off-road/all-terrain vehicles';

"Whereas this motion was passed on November 7, 2013, to amend the Highway Traffic Act 316/03;

"Whereas the economic benefits will have positive impacts on ATV clubs, ATV manufacturers, dealers and rental shops, and will boost revenues to communities promoting this outdoor activity;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We call on the Ministry of Transportation to implement this regulation immediately."

I agree with this petition and present it to page Caitlin to bring down to the table to the Clerks.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further petitions?

There being none, orders of the day.

1330

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

RADON AWARENESS AND PREVENTION ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION AU RADON ET LA PROTECTION CONTRE L'INFILTRATION DE CE GAZ

Mr. Qaadri moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 11, An Act to raise awareness about radon, provide for the Ontario Radon Registry and reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces / Projet de loi 11, Loi visant à sensibiliser le public au radon, à prévoir la création du Registre des concentrations de radon en Ontario et à réduire la concentration de ce gaz dans les logements et les lieux de travail.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

M. Shafiq Qaadri: Merci, monsieur le Président. Je veux maintenant présenter la Loi visant à sensibiliser le public au radon, à prévoir la création du Registre des concentrations de radon en Ontario et à réduire la concentration de ce gaz dans les logements et les lieux de travail.

M. Mike Colle: Excellent.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you to the honourable member from Eglinton—Lawrence for his always good wishes and constant cheerleading. I appreciate it.

Speaker, I value this time allotted to me to raise this important issue, which I think has deep public implications going forward. At the outset, of course, I would like to recognize the original parent of this bill, MPP Reza Moridi, who also serves in our cabinet in various portfolios, including the Ministry of Research and Innovation. I'm also particularly delighted to be joined by one of our newly elected members, the MPP for Kitchener Centre, Daiene Vernile, not only in her capacity as MPP

for that great riding, but also in her capacity as the parliamentary assistant to Minister Moridi. I'm honoured to have one of our newly elected members joining us for the moral and physical support of this bill.

A quick orientation with regard to what exactly radon is—and at the outset I'd like to apologize for perhaps some of the physics that is coming your way, some of the elevated science talk.

First of all, there is a famous element—it may be a dangerous and possibly even somewhat evil element—out there known as uranium-238. Of course, many of us will be familiar with this particular element, as it was originally used in a highly enriched manner to create the atomic bomb, nuclear bomb, strategic and tactical.

This issue, of course, is very prevalent because this element is not only widespread, found more or less everywhere throughout the world in our soil, but particularly here in Canada and across North America.

It's a very heavy element. What that means is that, if you look at it with schematic diagrams, it's like a balloon at the microscopic level and has lots and lots of particles inside. To physicists, these particles are known as protons and neutrons. By the way, it's 92 protons and 146 neutrons; that's what makes this stuff so heavy.

The issue—and this is where it affects us and our human health—is that all those particular particles don't actually want to stay in there. They leak, and that, of course, is what causes ill effects, including cancer, when we have radon gas produced.

When these particular particles that are embedded in that extremely heavy element known as uranium-238 leak, they create what are called daughter products. I don't think there's any sexism intended; I think the fellows who named this came up with that. But in any case, these are literally, perhaps, the progeny or the sons and daughters or the offspring of that particle.

Now, when those particular little infants populate our homes and our air, whether it's the air that I'm breathing now in Parliament or, more particularly, in enclosed spaces that are lower down—for example, basements, crawl spaces, enclosed, non-ventilated areas—that's when radon gas is concentrated, and that's when health implications come up for Ontarians.

For example, we're looking at attics, crawl spaces, in garages, perhaps. It's in the earth. It's in mines, in particular, and particularly uranium mines, and that's of course where this whole idea of radon gas poisoning unfortunately came to light. That's when the leaked by-product of this evil element, uranium, can accrue in such concentration that it leads to real impact.

I'd also like to acknowledge the wonderful assistance received from Steve Mahoney, who at the time was the head of the Radiation Safety Institute of Canada, as well as my many, many colleagues from the Ontario Lung Association for their material and moral support for this particular bill.

So what happens? Basically, when the uranium particles discharge their daughter products—their progeny, the offspring—they concentrate. You can't, by the way, wait

for this stuff to go away. It's not like you burn something in cooking, and maybe if you open a couple of windows, it's gone. The half-life of this stuff is about 4.5 billion years, which, I think, even with the most popular government, will likely exceed any one government's mandate. In any case, the stuff is not actually going anywhere fast.

When these gas products—parts of them become solid particles—what they actually do is they fly around in the air. They essentially invest themselves into dust particles and we inhale that stuff. It actually goes and sits in our lungs, literally, for the next 4.5 billion years. What happens? Well, about 15% or maybe about 20% of the lung cancers in Canada are caused primarily by radon gas.

Interjection: What per cent?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: It's 15% to 20%. About 80% or so—as you know, of course, the fastest way to get lung cancer, not that I recommend it—is by smoking. But 15% to 20% are caused by inhaling stale air in non-ventilated areas or, by the way, inside a uranium mine, that have essentially been infested, if you would, with radon gas particles.

We know this for a number of reasons because unfortunately, as doctors, we are actually diagnosing patients with lung cancer who have never smoked. So it was kind of a big puzzle for doctors. “What do you mean that it says ‘lung cancer’? I don’t smoke.” That’s what led physicians and others to actually do the research and to say, “What is the possible cause, etiology, pathway or genesis of this particular issue?”

Of course, there are many other conditions or triggers of lung cancer, whether it's family history, genetic predisposition, first- or second-hand smoke, and there's occupational exposure as well. But unfortunately, one of the negative factors with regard to the causation of lung cancer is this whole area of radon gas.

Why this particular bill, Bill 11, An Act to raise awareness about radon? I think we in Ontario need to actually inspire ourselves to join and keep up with other jurisdictions, both in the United States as well as the United Kingdom, who, I might add, are much further along in institutionalizing, formalizing and codifying the monitoring, regulation and remediation of airspaces that contain or may potentially contain excess radon gas.

Uranium-238 is found essentially everywhere—soil, rock and water. It's in the air in this particular building. Probably, by the way, if we were to do particular measurements in the lovely dining room that we go to, which is entrapped in the basement with no window, I think, in visibility—this, of course, has deep implications for our built environment. When the gas is released, it dissipates into the atmosphere, but when it's caught or trapped—when there is no light at the end of the tunnel, you're looking at, unfortunately, a concentration of these decaying particles. These are fissionable particles that actually can be measured and seen, for example, with radio isotope scans and those Geiger counter-type things, if you have a sensitive enough instrument. I'll spare you the micron measurement, but what it does is, the stuff that we inhale enters our body and can go into various

body spaces and then actually leads to real cancer DNA effects in our own cells.

As I said, we knew this, for example, when we were exposed, unfortunately, in Ontario, to a horrendous history when we had, in Elliot Lake, about 220 documented deaths from lung cancer in a single complex of uranium mines because of this radon gas exposure. Even though that was way back in 1974, there were many reports. The Ontario royal commission on health and safety issued various warnings. Unfortunately, you don't have to go into a mine; you just have to find some nice enclosed space and not let it be ventilated for quite a while to essentially expose yourself to potentially dangerous levels of this stuff.

I know we're not allowed to use props, Speaker, so I will spare you that. But suffice it to say that probably the size of a largish radio—this is a radon measurement kit. Basically, you place it within a basement or an enclosed space. By the way, as a salute or shout-out to our table officers, they might suggest we contact our colleagues at the Radiation Safety Institute and maybe even do a few measurements of some of the enclosed spaces, particularly the dining room.

I've even had suggestions—I'm not sure about my feeling on this, but some have even suggested that we move that dining room to where the library is so we don't continually expose—

Mr. Mike Colle: God forbid we have a window in the dining room.

1340

Ms. Sylvia Jones: There are no windows in the library, either.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Oh, there are lots of windows in the library. I would invite you to visit there once in a while and you'd see it.

In any case, where the air is heaviest and it sinks and is sort of trapped for a certain period of time, if you leave that and monitor—unfortunately, it's not like a short-term measurement. It's not one of these things that we just measure the temperature or even, by the way, like a smoke alarm where it instantaneously goes off or like a carbon monoxide alarm. It does take a certain amount of time, probably I would say 60 to 90 days or so, and if you get a reading of 200-plus—again, I'll spare you the physics attached to it because it's a little on the high level, but 200-plus unfortunately is considered potentially dangerous and needs to be remediated or addressed.

Folks who are breathing this stuff on an ongoing basis—it will expose them to true radiation-induced DNA damage, and of course that can have deep, long-term health effects, as you will very easily see if you contact colleagues at the Radiation Safety Institute of Canada or the Ontario Lung Association.

What does this mean on a population-wide basis? Unfortunately, 2,000 lung cancer deaths annually; 2,000 lung cancer deaths—by the way, of the 20,000 lung cancer deaths that happen annually in Canada—are caused by radon. About 40% of those, unfortunately, 800 in terms of the number, are basically affected primarily by radon; others will have other triggers that go into it.

This is important because you can't just train a dog, buy a quick monitor or put some little acid paper out and have it turn blue and indicate the first response about radon. This stuff is colourless, tasteless and odourless, but as I say, it is very much a part of our built environment. Any time you're near any kind of an energy source, for example—by the way, with some of these newer high-powered HDTVs and you stick them in a basement, some of the energy effects that are given off may actually promote what we call ionization. The radon doesn't come out of that stuff directly, but as I say, the more energy you put near chemicals, literally it stirs up the pot.

These are very important issues. I hope we will not take another generation to realize it as, unfortunately, physicians and the broader community did with regard to things like tobacco smoking or, by the way, HIV/AIDS or the dangers of obesity. I think the time has come where we should now move on the whole issue of radon.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise to speak to Bill 11, the Radon Awareness and Prevention Act. I want to thank the member from Etobicoke North for bringing this bill forward. I also want to thank him for his explanation of what impact radon has on people's health and the importance of this bill coming forward.

Obviously, on the issue of the effects of radon, where it's happening and so forth, he is far better equipped to speak to that than I am, as a doctor, as he mentioned in his presentation. My presentation is really about the bill itself and the implementation and whether we're hitting the mark on how we will solve the problem and is that actually going to work.

When I was first asked to speak to this bill as critic for municipal affairs and housing, I kind of wondered how the radon awareness bill would become a municipal affairs issue. In fact, it's because it's an amendment to the building code.

The reason I bring that up is that the challenge with that, as I had with my carbon monoxide bill, is that when you put something in the building code, the only time that that's dealt with in the silos of government is when someone gets a building permit, and then they look at the building code to see what needs to be done in order to facilitate meeting all the standards that the government and the industry have set. But, in fact, after the fact for the existing buildings and so forth, that would not then come up and there's no mechanism within the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to do a lot of the things that are suggested in this bill, such as dealing with public awareness and so forth, because the consultation that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs does on the building code is in fact consultation of what changes need to be made in the building code going forward.

The reason I mention this for the member who introduced the bill is that I had the same thing with my carbon monoxide bill. When I first introduced it, it was under the Building Code Act, because that's where the

installation would normally be, you'd think. But in that place, there was no way the local fire departments could, in fact, enforce it, so we had to change it to the Fire Protection and Prevention Act in order to be able to facilitate the operation of it and to look at, first of all, the installation in existing residences, and, secondly, to go on and make sure there was some type of enforcement in place.

I also want to say that this is the second time that the member has brought this bill forward. It's actually the third time that it is before us here in the Legislature. I want to recognize the member from Richmond Hill for having introduced it for the first time.

I also want to recognize the Radiation Safety Institute of Canada and the Ontario Lung Association for their support of this bill and their work to raise awareness of the dangers of this gas. I appreciate their efforts to educate members on all sides of the House about the dangers of radon and the steps needed to reduce that risk.

Radon is colourless and odourless and has no taste. In that way, it's very similar to carbon monoxide, which was the subject of my private member's bill. Some of you may remember that it took five years to get that bill passed, but one of the things that I realized in that long time period and the many times I brought the bill forward is that it allowed us to significantly raise the awareness of the dangers of carbon monoxide, and I think that will be true for radon, as we're talking about here. The fact that the member brought this bill forward for debate again is already increasing the awareness of radon, how it is generated and how it gets into homes, and the impact it has on those who live there.

In fact, there are many people who had never heard of the danger of radon before this bill was introduced. But as my friend and the former member from Burlington pointed out during the last debate, according to estimates by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, radon is the second most frequent cause of lung cancer after smoking cigarettes. In fact, according to Health Canada, it is estimated that non-smokers exposed to high levels of radon over a lifetime have a one in 20 chance of developing lung cancer. That estimate increases to one in three for a smoker exposed to high levels of radon over a lifetime.

However, in our efforts to protect people, we need to be cautious that we aren't just overregulating. I want to commend the member from Etobicoke North for proposing that we collect all the data from the radon tests completed across the province to be able to better identify the high-risk areas. However, if the first step is creating a map of Ontario showing radon levels, then it makes sense to me that we would concentrate our efforts on those areas where there are high levels and not treat all parts of the province the same.

In fact, Health Canada did a study entitled Cross-Canada Survey of Radon Concentrations in Homes, which gave us some data on where radon issues are the highest. The study found that across Canada, 6.9% of homes had radon levels higher than the guidelines. In

Ontario, our radon levels are lower; only 4.6% of homes exceeded the guidelines.

There are 3,891 households in Ontario that participated in the survey. The study broke those results down by health units. What's interesting is that when you look at the data, there are wide variations in regions. There are some areas, like the York region, Durham region, and Peel regional health units, that didn't report a single house that had radon exceeding the guidelines. It simply doesn't make sense to force every business in those areas to go through the time and expense of testing for radon if there is no risk to their employees. It also doesn't make sense to require governments to spend money testing homes that they own in those areas if there is very minimal risk or no risk at all in those homes.

In other health units, almost 20% of the participants in the Health Canada study were living in homes where the radon levels exceeded the guidelines—20% of those homes. Obviously, that's where we need to focus our greatest attention. Let's focus our efforts in those areas. Let's raise awareness so that people test their homes and take steps to minimize the radon coming into their homes. In those areas, businesses should be testing to make sure that employees are not being exposed to high levels of radon. The mapping and tracking of data will give us the tools to reduce radon exposure in areas where there is the highest risk. I want to encourage the minister and the people in those areas not to wait until this bill is passed, but to get on with the testing now. If you are in an area with high levels of radon—and that information is available—consider testing your home or your business as soon as possible.

1350

I've received several emails from constituents which asked, "Protect Ontarians from cancer-causing radon gas by requiring that homes be built with features like venting in order to reduce exposure to this deadly carcinogen."

I'm pleased that this bill will make amendments to the building code to ensure that new homes are constructed in such a way that we will minimize the risk, but, as I said earlier, it would only apply to new builds.

I want to question the implementation of this bill. The minister has up to five years—and I think it's the timing in the bill for the member who introduced the bill—to make changes to the building code. The bill requires the owners of businesses to ensure that radon levels in the normal occupancy area of the workplace is measured by a radon specialist by December 2016. If they have it measured, remedial action needs to be taken. The building code does not include any information at this point to make those changes.

I have a few questions too about the specialists. The industry must use a specialist to measure it. By 2016, will we have enough specialists to actually do those businesses if it was passed? When the bill was introduced in May 2011, it included the same deadlines for the businesses, which would have given them more than five years to complete the testing. When the bill was re-

introduced in September 2013, it included the same deadlines, so that left a three-year window to make the test. Of course, we don't know how long it will take for it to get third reading, but if my carbon monoxide bill is any indication, it's possible that we will pass 2016 before we have the bill passed. So they would have no time at all to get it done. I'm just suggesting that we would be better served if we took out the dates in there to state a certain length of time after the passing of the bill.

As I mentioned earlier, there are some areas where there are no homes exceeding the radon guidelines, so why do businesses in those areas need to test?

Mr. Speaker, I have concerns about the requirements of government-owned housing. For most homeowners, a do-it-yourself kit is sufficient to test for radon. Yet the legislation is quite explicit that government housing must, in fact, be done by a specialist. It would seem to me that who owns the building should not pick up how the testing should be done.

The other part on government housing—and I know it's for, I suppose, security, and people have a right to let people in and out of their homes, but if we're going to demand that government must test all their homes and say, "But if the occupant doesn't want them in there, they don't have to do it," we're going to have a lot of challenges as to: If there was a problem detected, did the government try hard enough to get the occupant to agree, and so forth? So I think that needs to be done.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ensure that we aren't spending money that we can't afford to do testing on radon levels in buildings that should be torn down in less than a year. A lot of times, government-owned housing with people living in them, in fact—they bought them for the purposes of future expansion of infrastructure. The bill would need to make sure that we don't have to do the testing in those homes.

We need to recognize the danger that radon presents, but we need to ensure that we're focusing our limited resources on the areas where we can make a real difference; that we are focusing on areas where people could be exposed to high levels of radon over time and where their health is being put at risk.

Again, I want to commend the member from Etobicoke North for his efforts in raising awareness of the dangers of radon and the need for the testing. We would support this bill going forward, and we commit to working with him in committee to make sure that all these issues are addressed. I look forward to saving more lives in the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I will be sharing my time for response as well. I'm glad to speak in response to Bill 11, An Act to raise awareness about radon, provide for the Ontario Radon Registry and reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces.

As I mentioned in my inaugural address, I live in a lovely little townhouse in Oshawa, and it is in a newer subdivision. There are, of course, many homes in Osh-

awa that are not new, many homes with firm but old foundations. Many of those foundations might be allowing poisonous radon to seep into family homes.

Oshawa is part of a wider area that has been identified as having concerning levels of naturally occurring radon. I didn't know that when I was buying my home. I didn't know, quite frankly, that radon was something that I needed to worry about. I suspect that this is an issue that many homeowners are unfamiliar with.

Yesterday, and today as well, I had the privilege of introducing a friend and constituent who came to appreciate Queen's Park and her government at work. She isn't 30 yet, and she has had pneumonia four times. She coughs and struggles with respiratory issues constantly, and she is always sent home with the appropriate puffer and to wonder why she is so prone to being sick. After reading this bill, I wonder if her old home, with cracks in the foundation, might actually be letting radon sneak in and into her family's lungs. I wonder how many doctors would ask someone with chronic bronchial distress if they've ever had their homes checked for radon.

The concern about radon levels and health risks increases, but the education and information made available to the average person in Ontario is inadequate. It's so inadequate that even I—someone who does pay attention, is educated and informed, who takes safety precautions and looks after her health—have learned something new from reading this bill. Radon awareness and education has been much like radon gas itself: invisible.

Some experts argue that there is no safe level of radon in homes and that any radon detected should be addressed. Approximately two people per day die of radon-caused lung cancer, which is actually closer to 850 Ontarians who are dying each year because of radon. This doesn't sound like the kind of issue that we can continue to ignore, and we cannot afford to keep this health concern on the back burner. We cannot afford to wait while Ontarians are getting sick.

Cancer rates will continue to rise if preventive measures are not prioritized. So is the government going to stand behind their own bill or tuck it back in a drawer, as has happened before? I hope that this bill will be taken seriously. There is nothing we can say against prevention, education or public health and safety, and we applaud measures to increase awareness.

According to Bill 11, the minister shall encourage homeowners to measure the radon level in their homes with a do-it-yourself kit or the services of a specialist. There are questions I hope will be considered in committee. The cost of a kit is about \$60. This might not be a huge expense, but how often do they need to be bought? How often do people need to test? Will there be laboratory and registry fees that we'll find out about later? Are there any plans to subsidize these kits for our most vulnerable community members? Can there be a tax refund for these kits? If people do a renovation to prevent radon leaking into their basements, is there something to offset the cost? How long is the waiting list to access

radon measurement specialists? We hope to get good answers to these questions for Ontarians in committee.

According to the bill, the minister shall ensure that the radon level in every provincially owned dwelling is measured by a radon measurement specialist by 2021. Privately owned buildings have to have the test done by 2016. Why are there two timelines? Why does the government need five more years than privately owned buildings, until 2021, to ensure that radon levels are measured by a radon measurement specialist? Radon, as we've heard, is the second leading cause of lung cancer, second only to smoking. How many people will develop or be diagnosed with or have to die of lung cancer between now and 2021? In those seven years, I would guess those numbers would be heartbreaking.

The recommendations that are out there are for people to test for radon if they suspect they have unsafe levels in their homes. Does the average homeowner know anything about radon? Radon is invisible, tasteless and odourless. I can't imagine how people would know to test if they've never heard about radon. I can't imagine how people would know to test for radon if they can't see, smell, taste or detect it. We need to get our communities educated and aware of the dangers of radon.

The bill provides that the minister shall conduct public education programs and provide the public with information about the health risks. What will that look like? What will be done to educate homeowners? What specifically will be done to educate contractors? Is radon testing part of home inspections?

Incidentally, the government has the power to amend the building code, without needing to bring it to the Legislature. Cabinet has that authority. There is nothing to prevent the government from educating the public now, before 2021. Campaigns for public safety are not tied to the passage of a law, and even in a minority government, this could have been made a priority. It is time to get the message out, with or without the bill.

We support awareness and prevention. We support education. Since this bill and its various incarnations have been around awhile, we would expect more from it.

1400

I will vote in favour of this bill because it is an important issue and is a step in the right direction. I do not support the lengthy and drawn-out timelines, and I worry that Ontarians will continue to be at risk while this Liberal government continues to drag its feet.

This bill will go to committee. Let's hope as members and as citizens of Ontario that we will have the opportunity to give Ontarians the protection they truly deserve.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I want to congratulate the member from Etobicoke North for actually bringing this forward again. I understand this is the third time that the bill has come to the House.

Interjection.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Yes, the third time. I know it might take years and sometimes ample introduc-

tions of bills for things to get through. But last session when I was here in the Legislature, there was actually a reception for radon—many MPPs were invited. I did attend, and I learned quite a bit about radon. If we didn't have that awareness lobby day or reception, I wouldn't have actually understood the explanation about what radon is and how the dangers affect human lives. We talked about this scientific explanation that the member from Etobicoke North has given. He's very thorough on that, so I do appreciate the explanation that you gave so that we can understand the dangers of radon and how it's found in uranium.

He talked about how it was found in mines. In 1976, there were over 200 deaths of miners. That's how it was brought to light, the effects of radon and the hazardous chemical that radon is, or vapour that it is. We've come to the conclusion, Speaker, that it is a silent killer: You can't smell it; you can't see it. There's no way of detecting it unless it's tested, so this bill does make sense so that we bring awareness and prevention. But testing should really be something we need to consider so that people aren't in their homes and exposed to something that's hazardous and in the long term could cause lung cancer and a detrimental outcome.

Radon is something that can seep through a dwelling through dirt floors; through cracks, as we talked about; through floors; sump pumps; gaps around pipes; basement drains; and it can move easily through concrete cracks through the walls. To me, those types of elements that are exposing us to a chemical or gas, potentially, in our homes are very serious. Everyone takes their health very seriously. We'll have our children downstairs. We'll have our grandparents downstairs. We're downstairs. We need to take this matter very seriously so that we can prevent deaths that don't need to happen if we have the knowledge that we have today so prevention can happen and people don't need to be exposed. So I think it's really important, Speaker, that we actually move this quicker through the system because people's health is at risk.

There was a report done, a study that called on the provincial government to take action. The paper was Lung Cancer Risk from Radon in Ontario, Canada: How Many Lung Cancers Can We Prevent? This was published in August 2013. A snippet of that says:

"An alternative approach to promoting individual adherence to the radon guideline is to design and install effective radon-preventive measures into buildings during initial construction through mandatory building codes. Although this is a long-term approach, it is likely to be far more effective at the population level and more cost-effective than a retrofitting remediation approach, and could drastically reduce the need for testing and remediation" overall.

I'd like to also point out that when I went on the Internet to look up more information about radon from the last session, the government of Canada does have information on radon. It's very informative, and it talks about how you can actually get it tested. It's very important, if people are going to have radon tested in their homes, as

the member from Oshawa pointed out very well—there's a cost involved. That is a factor we have to take into consideration, but also we need to make sure that a professional is going to be testing for the radon. I personally don't have the knowledge and skills to even have a home kit and to trust that home kit when I'm dealing with my family's lives and the exposure to any chemical that's potentially death-causing, so I would suggest that people go on to the government of Canada website, look that up and find out the qualifications that someone should have—a certified radon mitigation professional—if you're not too confident in your own ability or your own conclusion when you're using a home kit, if that's the way you choose to go.

So, Speaker, I do hope that this bill gets through the House and goes to committee, and that the questions from the member from Oshawa are answered. She put a lot of thought into those questions, and I know she did a lot of homework last night researching this radon bill, so congratulations for presenting such a great, thoughtful way of addressing this bill. New Democrats do support it, if it means the health and safety of workers and families—

Ms. Catherine Fife: It could be a government bill.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Absolutely. This is a good bill, and it's the third time that it has been presented in this House, so I hope that this time it will be successful.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I will be sharing my time with the member from Richmond Hill. I'm pleased to speak in the House today on Bill 11, An Act to raise awareness about radon, provide for the Ontario Radon Registry and reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces.

This private member's bill is being presented by my colleague from Etobicoke North, who is no doubt very concerned about this. It's of especial importance to him, as he is a family doctor. With him, I would like to express my concerns in ensuring that the people of Ontario remain safe from exposure to this potentially deadly element. We should mention that this bill was initiated by the current Minister of Research and Innovation, with whom I have the pleasure of working as his new PA.

Bill 11, if passed, will certainly increase the level of safety in homes and businesses, not just for us, but for generations to come. As you've heard my members stating already, quite eloquently, radon is an inert gas that is formed by the radioactive decay of uranium-238, which you'll find in rocks and soils in the earth's crust.

Health Canada tells us that when this escapes from the bedrock into outdoor air, it's so diluted that it produces a very negligible threat to health, but when radon gas is released into a building constructed over bedrock or soil, it can seep into those structures and accumulate to high levels in enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces. Radon is invisible. You can't see it, you can't smell it, you can't taste it—but it is a silent killer. Studies carried out in Canada and across the globe have shown us that exposure

to high levels of radon has been associated with an increased risk of lung cancer.

Many of my colleagues are aware of the fact that most of the predominant locations of exposure to high levels of radon are in underground mines. It is shocking for us to learn that there are studies revealing some residential homes to be on the same level of exposure to radon as mines. As you've heard my esteemed members say, current estimates suggest that radon in homes is responsible for approximately 15% of all lung cancer deaths in Canada, making radon the second-leading cause of lung cancer after tobacco smoking.

Underground miners are at greater risk of exposure to uranium rock, which emits radon gases. Studies of uranium miners have consistently shown that these workers are at increased risk of lung cancer. Mr. Speaker, Canada is the world's largest producer and exporter of uranium, yet the efforts and preventions in place to protect these employees at these mines do not reflect this enormous number.

As miners dig the uranium-bearing ore, they release large quantities of radioactive radon gas into the mine atmosphere. These gases stay within the mines and are then breathed into the miners' lungs, where they lodge, delivering a massive dose of radiation to the sensitive lung tissue. What we are seeing is an extraordinarily high incident rate of lung cancer among these workers. There have been more than 220 documented deaths, and up to 400 estimated lung cancer deaths, at Elliot Lake uranium mines. This is an enormous human cost.

You've heard the member from Etobicoke North give us some very disturbing stats. Approximately 20,000 people die each year in Canada from lung cancer; from that figure, it's estimated that 2,000 of those occur as a direct result of radon gas exposure. Out of those 2,000 deaths caused by radon, 40% are taking place in Ontario; that's 800 deaths per year in our province tied to radon.

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It may be of interest to my honourable colleagues to know that legislation such as that being proposed by the member for Etobicoke North has been in place in other jurisdictions and countries such as the United Kingdom. Legislation there has led to the creation of a comprehensive radon map for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This map allows homeowners and employees to live and work in safety by ensuring proper testing. Prevention devices are also in place so radon exposure is reduced. Bill 11 would seek to do the same in Ontario: test for radon and create a registry with maps. These maps will make it easier for control and prevention by our government.

We have taken many steps to reduce lung cancer and have seen legislation from different levels of government to reduce our exposure to carcinogenic agents. Think back to the 1980s and 1990s, how we moved to reduce and eventually eliminate smoking in the workplace. I can remember how back in January 2000, in my community of Waterloo region, we became one of the first jurisdictions in Ontario and all of Canada that banned smoking

in almost all indoor public places, so restaurants, bars, pubs, bowling alleys and shopping areas. This was considered very controversial at the time. Many of these establishments thought that they would lose business. But our health and safety authorities stuck to their plan, and many of these establishments actually said, after the bylaw was passed, that business went up. Soon we saw many other communities across Ontario following suit, using the Waterloo region model as a foundation for their own smoking ban bylaw.

Mr. Speaker, by ensuring the passage of Bill 11, An Act to raise awareness about radon, provide for the Ontario Radon Registry and reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces, we can continue on a path to a healthier Ontario.

I commend my colleagues for Etobicoke North and for Richmond Hill and offer my support on behalf of the good people of Kitchener Centre in promoting this very important bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Reza Moridi: Mr. Speaker, at the outset, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleague the member for Etobicoke North for reintroducing this very important bill to this Legislature.

I would like to begin by first providing some background on the history of radon gas and its carcinogenic effects.

Radon gas is an inert gas formed by the radioactive decay of uranium-238. This is a radioactive element found in soil, rock and water in the crust of our planet, earth. Wherever you go on this planet, you can find some amount of uranium.

According to Health Canada, when the radon escapes from the bedrock into an outdoor environment, it's so diluted that it doesn't cause a major health threat to individuals. However, when radon gas is released into a building built over bedrock or soil, it can accumulate to high levels in an enclosed area which is poorly ventilated. Upon further decay, this gas releases particles which are radioactive in their own right into the indoor air. When this air is inhaled by individuals, they possess sufficient energy to damage the DNA molecules in our lung tissue.

Current estimates suggest that radon in homes is responsible for approximately 10% of all lung cancer deaths in Canada, making radon the second cause of lung cancer, after smoking.

Underground miners and workers are also at great risk from exposure to radon gas, as studies have consistently shown that miners exposed to high levels of radon gas are at high risk of developing lung cancer. As miners dig uranium-bearing ore underground, they inevitably release large amounts of radioactive radon gas into the mine environment. These gases stay within the mines and are then breathed into the miners' lungs, where they lodge, delivering a massive amount of alpha radiation dose to the lung tissues. That results in lung cancer. However, currently, there are stringent rules and regulations by the

Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission when it comes to mining uranium, and our underground uranium mines, particularly in Saskatchewan, are safe for miners to work in.

I should indicate that there have been more than 220 documented deaths and up to 400 estimated lung cancer deaths in Elliot Lake uranium mines, and these mines have not been operational since the early 1990s.

In 1974, the Ontario Royal Commission on the Health and Safety of Workers in Mines pointed out that Elliot Lake uranium miners had already experienced twice as many lung cancers as expected. Instances such as the ones at the Elliot Lake mines and others around the world have had enormous financial and human costs. It's important to note that Ontario had one of the worst radon-related workplace disasters in the world, and there's still no legislation and no steps have been taken by the government to combat this epidemic.

Of the 2,000 lung cancer deaths across Canada, 40% of these deaths take place in our province of Ontario, which basically means that 800 people a year die as a result of unnecessary exposure to radon gas in homes, buildings and schools. As a result of the dangers of radon exposure in homes and workplaces, this bill seeks to do the following:

—Given the large number of deaths from lung cancer from direct exposure to radon gas, the public must be aware of the health implications and take the necessary steps to protect themselves.

—It's also very important to test residential homes, schools and other buildings for exposure to radon gas. When it comes to buildings, it's very key to test schools and daycares for this deadly gas because children exposed to high levels of radon gas unfortunately are at much higher risk than adults.

—Finally, there must be the establishment of the Ontario radon registry, which all of the above testing results will be filtered through. The registry will record all the results and ultimately create a radon map for Ontario. This map will show the areas of the province where radon is more prominent than in other places. Therefore, people living in those areas will have a better idea where they are in terms of exposure to this naturally occurring gas.

It may be of interest to my colleagues to note that legislation such as is proposed here has been in place in many countries around the world.

Mr. Speaker, as a government, we have taken many steps to reduce lung cancer and have placed legislation from different levels of government to reduce Ontarians' exposure to carcinogenic agents. It's very prudent that we pass this legislation so that Ontarians will have peace of mind when they live in their homes, work in their workplaces and also send their children to daycares and schools.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I listened with interest to the member from Etobicoke North. I actually followed along

when you debated this on September 12, 2013, and it was very similar—almost identical, actually—which is, I suppose, one example of recycling and reusing.

I very much appreciated the comments from the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities and Research and Innovation. I thought that you brought a lot of new information and, quite frankly, some motivation as to why we need to move quickly on this.

The member from Oshawa raised some excellent points when she said that there are actually specific items in this bill that don't need to be legislatively done. There could be some movement forward on public education programs and amendments to the Building Code Act that do not have to be held in a legislative forum. Therefore, we don't have to wait again for another year and a half.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Etobicoke North, you have two minutes for a response.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Speaker. I salute all my colleagues: from Oxford and Oshawa, even the somewhat reluctant praise offered there from the member from Dufferin-Caledon; London-Fanshawe, Kitchener Centre and the Minister for Research and Innovation, particularly my colleague the newly elected Daiene Vernile from Kitchener Centre.

I think all my colleagues brought intelligent, worthy, valid points that hopefully we'll be able to work out the parameters in committee.

1420

I think we need to tell Ontarians that radon gas is everywhere, particularly in basements, attics, enclosed, non-ventilated spaces.

Unfortunately, we as doctors are seeing more and more non-smokers, for example, who are getting lung cancer—something on the order of about 2,000 diagnoses made per year. That, originally, was what led us to start researching how patients can get lung cancer without smoking. As one point was made by my colleague the Minister of Research and Innovation, if you do both—you have, for example, chronic radon exposure because you're exposing yourself to stale, trapped air and you smoke—you literally put yourself into a hyperdrive with regard to lung cancer.

As many folks have talked about, for example, the lead piping map that was released recently in the city of Toronto, I think it's important for us to do something similar with regard to radon across Ontario, because, as was mentioned, like everything, like a bell curve distribution, some homes, for whatever reason—whether it's the building materials or where they're situated or geographic or geologic spread dispersion—will definitely have more exposure beyond the limits, which is 200, by the way, of radon gas exposure.

I sincerely hope that however many times it takes to introduce this bill here, it will eventually be adopted, and that we do not take a generation to realize this serious risk, as we've done with, for example, smoking and cancer.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. We'll take the vote at the end of private members' public business.

PROTECTING EMPLOYEES'
TIPS ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA PROTECTION
DU POURBOIRE DES EMPLOYÉS

Mr. Potts moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 12, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to tips and other gratuities / Projet de loi 12, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui concerne les pourboires et autres gratifications.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Arthur Potts: It is a great honour for me today to speak to Bill 12, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000—also known as the Protecting Employees' Tips Act. Some know this as an even shorter title: the tipping bill. I've had some comments from my colleagues that, as the PA to agriculture, they hope that this had nothing to do with livestock. But no, the purpose of this bill is to ban tipping out to restaurant owners and other employers who have skilled employees who receive tips in the workplace, such as hairstylists, massage therapists and others.

I brought this bill forward to honour a campaign promise. During the course of the campaign, my predecessor in Beaches—East York, Mr. Prue, who I know to have been an excellent member in the House, brought this bill forward three times. I do this also to honour him. It's a good bill. It has received a lot of support from the House in the past, and I hope it continues to receive all-party support moving forward.

In Beaches—East York, there are hundreds of restaurants all across our neighbourhood, along O'Connor, along the Danforth, Gerrard, Kingston Road, Queen Street East, and I, of course, encourage members to come and enjoy the hospitality of Beaches—East York restaurants as much as you can. Some are just mom-and-pop shops: Golden Pizza, for instance, right beside our campaign office, where we hosted a fantastic rally during the campaign, which the Premier was at. They're a fantastic family, working very hard—owner-operators—and this bill addresses their concerns as well.

The hospitality sector is an important industry across the province, across the city and certainly in Beaches—East York. It's an industry that employs hundreds of thousands of people, and they're looking to us for some direction and some leadership here.

The idea of the bill: It protects the hard-earned money of those workers who show up and do their best to get recognition, particularly in restaurants, from people who are eating there, that they have done a good job—and they get tipped out. People who are at those restaurants don't expect that when they leave a tip it's going to go to other than those who prepared the food, seated them at their table and served the food, poured their drinks etc.

When it was first introduced, Mr. Speaker, the bill had a similar goal, but it was simply one line long. It was a

very simple bill, applying the KISS principle, if you will. It was just one line long, and it was deemed by staff to be unenforceable. Last year, it came in front of a committee after second reading, and there was a significant number of amendments made to the bill. Our government worked very closely with the former member to bring those amendments forward, and it did enjoy widespread support across the House, but unfortunately the bill died on the order paper because we went to an unnecessary election—it strikes me that I should probably stop saying that, because I'm actually delighted that it happened.

Ms. Catherine Fife: An unnecessary election?

Mr. Arthur Potts: Not to me, being elected. It became necessary for me to have the pleasure to be in this House, but it was unfortunate for others.

The bill includes so many of these amendments that were made at committee through public input. There were hearings on November 27, 2013. There were people who showed up from industries, people who showed up from industry associations and many other stakeholders. They made suggestions on how the bill could be improved, and it was improved.

It was improved so that mom-and-pop shops should be allowed to participate in tip pooling when they participate as key members of the staff preparing or serving the food. It was improved to protect the practice of tip sharing between waiters and servers, which is often on a voluntary basis; it allows this to continue.

It also protects collective bargaining agreements dealing with issues around tips in unionized organizations. As an individual with a master's degree in labour relations, it's very important, I think, that in all of our legislation we keep an eye to the impact that legislation might inadvertently have in the collective bargaining environment, and this does recognize those important distinctions.

It also became very much more enforceable under the terms of the Employment Standards Act, through a complaint process which is very well understood and which employees can access if other violations happen under the act.

Unlike the previous bill, it does not include a section requiring that an employee representative be at hand for the distribution of all the tips. It was felt by many industry associations, business owners and others that this became an unnecessary bureaucratic burden on the employer and employees alike, so that one segment of the bill has been removed from the one that was in front of the House last year.

We believe that the bill strikes a very balanced approach built on fairness for both workers and business owners. I have consulted with the Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association on this bill. I have consulted with the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario, and with Restaurants Canada.

Restaurants Canada's vice-president had this to say about the bill: It's a good balance in this bill, because it "protects employee rights without creating an additional regulatory burden on restaurant owners." We're very

pleased that we're moving forward in a way that has the support of industry, and it will have the support of the workers who do this work.

As a restaurant owner myself, I want to make it clear that this bill does not call into question the integrity of all restaurant owners and employers of people with tips. It is a very small fraction of employers, we think, that have taken advantage of opportunities where they can enrich themselves through the tip-outs of their employees.

The restaurant that I co-own explicitly sets out a tipping policy and who receives what. The servers put a portion aside, and it's divided up amongst the back of the house, the bussers, the hostesses and the bartenders. Management receives nothing and never has, and it's the right thing to do.

Now, the reason that some claim that employers would want to be receiving some of the tip-out has to do with issues around repairing broken dishes or glasses, or maybe recovering credit-card charges. Often when a restaurant user or someone at a restaurant leaves a tip, they'll leave it on a credit card, and the credit card companies will charge a percentage of that, which is lost to the employer and would be lost to the employee. They've also tried to receive some of those tips in order to do capital upgrades in the restaurant, or for large holiday parties.

There are additional issues that have been identified by the hotel association that they want to address, associated with some of those issues, and these are issues that we can bring back up in committee. If there are refinements that need to be made, we'll certainly take a look at them.

Now, we know that the practice of tipping in Ontario is to help supplement the incomes of the staff who work in there. Under our Employment Standards Act, we have a minimum-wage law which allows \$11 an hour for people who are working in general industry, but it has a reduced amount for employees who are in the serving industry, at \$9.55.

1430

I understand that has come up a long way. We've been bringing that rate up, this government, over the past many years, but it's still a lower minimum rate for people in the service industry because of the fact that they receive tip-outs, which are supposed to improve their wages. If employers are allowed to take a portion of their tip-out, they're essentially removing money that should be applied as part of their minimum wage, and that's a fundamental reason why we have to make sure this practice is stopped.

We believe that protecting servers' tips will strengthen the measures that our government has taken to improve their standards of living because, as I said, they do receive a lower rate and now it will be improved.

Other jurisdictions in Canada and the United States have done this. We are not trailblazing here. Quebec has a similar program in place. New York state has a program in place, as do New Brunswick and PEI. I believe it's time that we followed their lead.

I would encourage my fellow members to vote for this bill. Like I said, it's had support in the past. I had the pleasure of speaking with the member for Toronto-Danforth earlier and he indicated that he thought he would be supportive of this bill, depending on what it looks like in its final reading. Unfortunately, I don't see him here to speak today. I was hoping he might rise and, as my member, speak in favour of this bill. Maybe he'll have a chance to do so at a later date.

I would encourage, if we could, that we refer this bill to a standing committee that I'm going to suggest should be general government, if that's what pleases the House.

Thank you very much. I do look forward to the support of all members on this bill, and thank you for allowing me to have the opportunity to introduce it and speak to it today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I'll just make reference to the member, as a new member, that we do not at any time refer to members who are not in the House; just a small correction.

Further debate.

Mr. Michael Harris: I'm happy to be speaking today to Bill 12, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to tips and other gratuities. I had an opportunity to welcome the new member from Beaches-East York this morning. I know I'll be splitting my time with the member for Thornhill, so I'll add a few comments and turn it over to her.

I think it's fair to again acknowledge the work of his predecessor, Mr. Michael Prue, former member for Beaches-East York. This was one of the issues that I do recall him bringing forward to the House and that we debated this bill on the floor, I believe, in the last session. He introduced this bill last session. I really want to thank again Mr. Prue for his service to the people of Beaches-East York as well as to the province of Ontario.

He is a fine individual—not that he is going to be far; I know that he has a lot to contribute, not only to his local community, but to the province and our country. I wish him all the best and I wish him some enjoyment. I know that he'll perhaps be taking the odd cruise, enjoying some downtime, and perhaps picking up some new baking recipes, as I know he so enjoyed doing—and which I enjoyed consuming. I'll miss that of him in committee. We sat in estimates committee together for, I guess, a couple of years, especially at the time when we were going through the power plant debacle. He had a lot of tough decisions to make. I thank him for that, and I thank him for his service, his kindness. I did have a chance to speak with Mr. Prue following the election; I wished him all the best. I wanted to get that out of the way. I know he served this Legislature for 13 years, and I thank him for that.

This bill defines a tip or a gratuity as “a payment voluntarily made to or left for an employee by a customer of the employee's employer” or a payment “made to an employer by a customer in such circumstances ... that the customer intended or assumed that the payment would be redistributed to an employee....”

I know when we all dine out—in fact, I had the privilege of taking in Summerlicious. I guess that was one good benefit, perhaps, of us coming back in the summer session: to enjoy Toronto's Summerlicious over the last little while. It ends, I believe, this Sunday, on the 20th. My colleagues and I have had several opportunities to enjoy some of the finest restaurants here in Toronto, at a relatively affordable price. I know that we got some exemplary service from the staff at many of those restaurants over the course of the last two weeks, and I thank them for that. But I think that as consumers, when we go to a restaurant and we get good service, we leave a tip, assuming or expecting that that tip will go directly to the individual who helped serve us.

I know some will say that in certain restaurants, tips are pooled and the staff in the back, in the kitchen, the servers, etc., split that, because they are a part of the team as well. I can only imagine—I have never worked in a kitchen, only consumed what they make, and I know that folks in the kitchen are run off their feet at times and work extremely hard in conjunction with the server who comes to your table, and we want to thank them as well. I think folks expect that, at times, when they do leave a tip, often the case is that it is pooled. But I don't think that they ever would expect it to go to an owner or an employer. I just don't think that is the case. In fact, for myself, I would never expect when I leave a tip that it goes to the owner. I feel that the owner's cut predominantly would come from the food, the regular charges and so forth.

Within this bill, if the employer were caught withholding tips, the amount withheld would be treated as if it were wages owing to the employee.

Another statute in this is the fact that the employer may withhold tips if a statute of Ontario or Canada or a court order authorizes it, or if the employer collects or redistributes the tips amongst all or some of the employees, or other employees, as I had mentioned just previously.

We really have no issue with this bill. We did have a few concerns with the original bill as was introduced originally by MPP Prue that have been addressed.

You know what? I'll leave the rest of my time to my colleague from Thornhill, because I think I've had my say on this, but I look forward to further debate and discussion on this important matter. Again, I encourage people, if they've not already enjoyed Summerlicious in Toronto, to get out, get on the website, make a reservation and enjoy some of the finest establishments that Toronto has to offer, as we did just recently.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It is my pleasure and my honour to rise today and speak to this bill that was introduced repeatedly by the former member of Beaches–East York, Michael Prue. Mr. Prue spent a great deal of time and energy speaking to constituents about their day-to-day concerns during his distinguished career as an MPP, and before that as a municipal representative for his beloved community of East York and Beaches.

Mr. Prue heard many, many complaints over the years from servers about the practice of tipping out. It's currently legal, and effectively it forces low-paid servers to give up a percentage of their hard-earned tip money to owners and to managers who are more highly paid.

The explanations that servers receive for why they should be giving away the tips they earn to their bosses were, in reality, the costs of running a business. Essentially, business owners were saying that in order for them to keep these people employed, they had to tip out. Apparently, servers' tips help owners defray credit fees and broken dishes, as has already been mentioned by the member for Beaches–East York. Of course, this is the reality. That's like owning a car and saying that you need a little more money in order to replace the windshield wipers or get an oil change. Those are the costs of owning and operating a car, just like broken dishes and credit card fees and paying your staff are the costs of running a restaurant. This makes no sense; it never has and never will.

I think often, actually, of the servers who serve us here in the Queen's Park restaurant. You have Richard and Joseph and Jenny and Leo. As far as I can tell, they pool their tips together, because they recognize that they are doing a collective service to the Legislature. I just want to say that I think that they do an amazing job, and we're lucky to have them here in the House.

But this tip-out bill—it speaks to Mr. Prue's qualities, his charm and his grace and his willingness to listen to everyone, that he decided to craft the initial version of this bill. Servers mentioned their frustration of tipping out, and Michael heard their concerns and followed up. He found out that while the practice was legal, it didn't need to be, and he designed the legislation to seek a little more justice on behalf of those people in this community who were already having a hard time making ends meet. It needs to be said that there's a predominance of female servers—waitresses—in this field. These are single mothers, students. They're trying to make their way through life. They need those tips to help them get to that place, those people in his community who are already having a hard time making ends meet.

1440

It's not that definition of what we are all here to do, but I'm sure we all understand. Some of us in this House—I know, for myself, I was a waitress. I was not a particularly good waitress and I was really happy to have the shared tips portion of that day. The question is, though: why are servers who are paid less than the provincial minimum wage not legally entitled to protection of their tip money from restaurant and bar owners and managers?

In 2010, and this is interesting, the Minister of Labour, when responding to a concerned server, told that server that he could do nothing to change this unfair practice because tips are not wages. In fact, even the Canada Revenue Agency considers tips to be wages, because servers are expected to claim their tips as income when filing their taxes. They have to claim them.

Today's debate is evidence that the Liberal government has changed its tune on whether or not anything could be done. They will be changing their tune on many issues, I propose, as they look at a 6% program cut going forward. A couple of years ago, in 2012, former Premier McGuinty publicly stated—this is a public statement from the former Premier—that Mr. Prue's bill must pass. He committed to ensure the protection of service workers who rely on tips. McGuinty's subsequent prorogation of the Legislature, of course, resulted in the bill not even making second reading debate. I remember this well because I had only been here for 11 days. I'm not bitter about that at all.

Debate was scheduled three days after the House prorogued. It's even more interesting that a member of the government has decided to revive Mr. Prue's bill. It's interesting that you're doing this.

It should also be noted that there are some restaurants that do not employ the practice of tipping out. I think it needs to be stated. We can't cast everyone in the same net. According to some sources that Mr. Prue cultivated, Milestones restaurants, for instance, do not practise tipping out to management. The Toronto Star quoted the Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association as not promoting sharing tips with management as well. So we have to be careful going forward that we don't cast everyone in the same shadow of this unfair practice.

Over the last three years, this issue has become wildly popular with Ontarians—workers and the media—as it should. I have to mention that during the by-election and the election campaign in Kitchener–Waterloo, I spoke to servers who were encouraged and heartened that a New Democrat MPP was fighting for something that really mattered to them, something that they didn't know could be changed. Isn't that the potential of this House? We all have the potential, as we take this seat, to make a positive change.

I want to commend the new member from Beaches–East York for bringing Mr. Prue's bill back to this Legislature and honouring his efforts in this way. I should add, though, that the new member has very big shoes to fill. If he hasn't already realized that, I'm sure he will be reminded of it on several occasions.

I also want to make mention that the former member for Beaches–East York used to make the best banana and chocolate chip bread known to this House. He used to have chocolate bars in his desk on a regular basis—

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Don't say that.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It doesn't matter. He's not here anymore. You can break the rules when you're not here anymore. His legend is very sound. He was a man for all seasons. Every day he came into this place he said, "It's another day in paradise," because he recognized the potential of making a difference when he took his seat.

I also want to add that even though this bill is now being introduced, obviously by the new member for Beaches–East York—congratulations—it is not being introduced as a government bill. I think a real tribute to Mr. Prue's work would have been for this government to

pass this legislation quickly. The potential of a government bill would actually have it expedited. As you can see, it's a short bill and a quick change to the law. Why not introduce it as a government bill and not a private members' bill? It may take years for this private member's bill to see the light of day. You know that's true. There are many private members' bills that sit on that list for days, for years, for decades.

However, there is one change in this version which I wish to draw attention to from the former member's bill. It's a fundamental thing that on this side of the House we fundamentally disagree with. In this version of the bill, collective agreements must expire before servers can take advantage of the bill's provisions. Why do that? It could be positive, it could be meaningful. It could recognize the work that those who serve the public in the private sector—it's a clear recognition of the work they do, yet you've missed that opportunity, as the bill is crafted in its current form.

It doesn't make much sense. If this change becomes law, then all of a sudden—you're working in a unionized environment—you don't get to benefit from the improvements made by this bill. For us, it makes no sense. If this bill in its current state were to become law, unionized servers might still be forced to tip out. That's a change to Mr. Prue's bill that we obviously cannot support. It is not the true intent of the original intention of the bill, and we will be looking to amend this. If this private member's bill ever sees the light of day, we will look to amend that, and we are giving you that notice.

I do hope that members from all sides of the House support this bill. I think the PCs will do that as well, if they've supported it in the past. I think that it's a testament that we can make it better in honour of the incredible efforts of Mr. Prue, who served this House with great integrity for many years.

I think, actually, the motivation and the emotion behind this bill is quite honestly that if we treat others the way we wish to be treated, with dignity, with grace, it says more about us as a government and the people we are. Certainly, those who serve us day in and day out in the restaurant industry need to be recognized in a more holistic way, in a more fair way. So we will be supporting this private member's bill going forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm happy to speak on this bill. I guess we're definitely calling it the stopping-the-practice-of-tipping-out bill.

My father actually worked as a waiter. I never worked as a waitress; I would have been terrible at it. But I was offered a job once, and he didn't want me to take it because he thought it was really tough work and he was, I guess, concerned for my safety and managing—

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It's not tougher than being an MPP.

Mrs. Gila Martow: It's not tougher than being an MPP. It sounds like it's a pretty difficult job—and you are correct, the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, when you say that it's a lot of women. I think we've all been to

different restaurants, from the fast-food joints to the much fancier restaurants for special occasions. You notice that the more expensive restaurants actually do tend to have more male waiters than female, and you wonder why that is. The tipping is obviously a lot higher. I would like to have some information, if the member from Beaches–East York is able to give it, on which restaurants are more likely to do this practice. Is it the chains, the franchises? Is it the lower-cost restaurants or the more expensive restaurants? I think that might be some information that's helpful to everybody.

Obviously, we all support an end to this practice. Why? Because when we're giving somebody a tip, it's a tip. It's an agreement between two people or two parties to give some additional money to recognize the special service they did. Nobody really feels that that money should necessarily be going to anybody else in the restaurant. If the waiter voluntarily wants to pool their earnings with the other staff in the restaurant, you can certainly see why. The *maitre d'* often gets a portion because they don't get any tips; a busboy and things like that, they're not able to reap the benefits. But certainly the owners of the restaurant—I think it's up to them to manage their business properly, and that means ensuring that there's some profit margin available to them either through food or—as we often know, the food is a loss leader and they're making the majority of their income from the drinks.

I remember my father often leaving tips in a restaurant. Whenever he could, he would pay with a credit card for the meal, but the tip he would want to leave in cash. I think that's something interesting to note and I think that's true for a lot of people, I notice, when they go to restaurants—the member is nodding his head. People tend to want to leave cash for the tip because they don't want to hear that the server had to wait days or even weeks to get their tip portion from the restaurant because the restaurant will say, “Well, I have to wait for the credit card statement to come through”—or whatever, the bank statement—“and make sure this person's credit card was good and that they weren't going to complain about the charge” or something like that and cause difficulties. Perhaps the restaurant would want to take off a percentage that was more than the actual percentage that the credit card company was charging because of maybe some kind of administrative cost for having to collect the money and then give the money out. Perhaps the server would be quitting the restaurant—often they don't stay very long in these jobs—before they even get their wages from the tips. I think that's an interesting practice that we still see where people are leaving cash tips.

1450

You have to wonder about taxes. Obviously, servers are supposed to pay taxes on their earnings in restaurants. We do know there's a large underground economy in Ontario that's really robbing us of revenue to build the infrastructure and provide the health care and education funding we need. If the owners of the restaurants are taking a portion of the tips, I'd like to know if anybody's

tracing that money and if they're paying taxes on the portion of the tips because an audit wouldn't necessarily know to look for that. They wouldn't be expecting a restaurant owner to be taking tips.

It's a global economy. There's a lot of tourism. We want to have those tourist dollars coming into Ontario, and I think tourists want to feel that they're being treated fairly. Nobody likes to go to Europe and get the bill from the restaurant where they're being told that there's a fee on top of the food, on top of the drinks, on top of the taxes, on top of the tips; there's a fee for the plates, for the place setting. If anybody has been to Europe, I think they know what I'm talking about. It's often in the tourist areas. Personally, there's nothing like that to turn me off going back to that restaurant.

We want tourists to come here and get great service. How do you get great service? You have smiling faces and happy servers. How do you do that? Well, when they're having to give up a portion of their income and they feel it's unfair, they're not going to be happy, and they're not going to be smiling. I don't think we would be terribly surprised at that.

I think that it's something we all want to see, especially with the Pan Am Games coming next summer. We don't want to see restaurants jack up their prices. We don't want to see long lineups. We want to see extra servers put in. We want to figure out how to feed all these visitors who are coming. We don't want to have the old—you know, after the Pan Am Games—“We should have done this” and “We should have done that.”

I think we're all here for a reason, and the reason is to anticipate all the problems going forward and find the solutions before the problems become—it happens too quickly for us to make the changes on the fly. It's certainly something we should be looking at, and maybe this should be part of it. We should be looking at sort of boosting tourism and how to make the Pan Am Games go smoothly in terms of not just giving people food but giving them food with that great Ontario smile. Maybe advertise Canadian fare—things with maple syrup; there are salad dressings with maple syrup.

I'm happy to speak on and support this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I want to make it very clear that this bill is only being debated today because of the hard work and dedication of the former member of Beaches–East York. So I want to acknowledge his hard work for bringing this bill to light, for bringing this issue to light.

I also want to congratulate the member on his election. But I want to make it very clear that while the member is bringing forward the former member from Beaches–East York's bill, he's bringing forward an inferior bill, a worse bill. Let's talk about why.

I heard the member from Kingston and the Islands heckle about the employment law and about being a labour supporter. Let me give you a little bit of education about employment law and labour law.

Interjection.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My apologies.

Let me give you some education about labour laws, as well as the new member from Beaches–East York. I'll forgive you for being a rookie. Let's make this very clear. Employment law indicates there are certain areas of law where if the law provides a greater deal of protection than a collective agreement, then the law should prevail. It only makes sense. If the government or the state provides more protection, enhanced rights, and if a collective agreement doesn't provide those rights, why would it make any sense to give inferior protection to an individual? Why would it make any sense that being a non-unionized member would entitle you to greater protection under the law than being a unionized member? That, in itself, doesn't make any sense.

What the member from Beaches–East York did in his bill was ensure that, much like for centuries—the law of the land is, if there is protection by the state that supercedes the collective agreement, then that should prevail; that should allow a member or an individual to have that protection.

That's something that's not here in this bill, and that's something that's certainly a weakness, and we will raise that at an opportunity that we have.

Moreover, it's so important that we recognize that service industry folks are among some of the most vulnerable people in our society. We need to ensure that they're protected, particularly given the fact that many women are working in the service industry. We need to ensure that they're protected in a meaningful way.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I am so pleased to rise today and support my colleague from Beaches–East York. The Protecting Employees' Tips Act, 2014, is a great bill, and I am delighted to have a chance to speak in favour of it.

I would like to commend the member from Beaches–East York for introducing this bill, and acknowledge the former member from that riding for the work that he did in bringing this issue forward. This bill is, in essence, about fairness.

J'aimerais féliciter le représentant de Beaches–East York pour avoir amené devant cette Chambre ce projet de loi.

This bill is about making sure that people are compensated fairly for the hard work that they do. It is also about honesty. When a customer leaves a tip, there is an expectation that it will go to the employee who helped them, and not the business owner. I know there are exceptions, which is why MPP Potts's version of the bill includes amendments that were brought forward in committee—amendments like one that understands that in small businesses sometimes the owner is also a crucial member of the serving staff and deserves tips as well.

Bien sûr, il y a des exceptions, entre autres au niveau des petites entreprises au sein desquelles le propriétaire est souvent une personne-ressource essentielle quant au service offert à leur clientèle.

Mr. Speaker, I know that many of the young people in my riding find their first jobs in the hospitality industry. Often, young people wouldn't be able to stand up to their supervisor or the owner of their establishment if they were unhappy about employment practices. This is a bill about protecting them. We want to ensure that no young person has to stand up to a supervisor alone. We want them to have the government of Ontario on their side, making sure they keep the money they are given for a job well done.

As a former businesswoman, I know how hard young people work. I was proud to give many young people in my riding their first jobs ever. But how can we ask them to work hard if they don't keep the money they've earned? This bill teaches fairness.

The hospitality industry provides massive economic benefit to the province of Ontario, and the people who work in this industry rely on the tips they receive from patrons. These workers are quite literally the face of our tourism industry.

Il ne faut pas oublier et surtout ne pas négliger l'impact qu'ont les employés du secteur de l'hospitalité sur l'expérience positive de chacune des personnes qui visitent notre belle province. Et c'est souvent le reflet de cette expérience positive qui fait en sorte que ces gens reviennent nous visiter.

They are our servers, our tour guides, our hotel staff and more. We rely on them to make sure that every person who comes to visit this great province has a wonderful experience and leaves wanting to return. They work on holidays and weekends, when everyone else is spending time with their families. I am proud to support a bill that supports workers like this. They deserve to be treated fairly.

Now, Speaker, I know that this bill is not representative of how all business owners treat their employees. But we, as Ontarians, believe in fairness and compensation for hard work. This bill ensures that the tips left for an employee go directly to them, the way it should be.

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This bill is a thoughtful piece of legislation that has the support of employees and employers alike. It is one more building block in our government's plan to support Ontarians. I encourage all members of this House to support this bill and send it to committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Mississauga–Brampton South.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I'm very pleased to rise today and speak in support of Bill 12, which is being brought forward by the member from Beaches–East York.

My colleague from Ottawa–Orléans spoke very eloquently. She explained that this bill is all about fairness when it comes to shared tips and gratuities, and she is very right.

First of all, I would like to congratulate the member from Beaches–East York on his recent election win, and I'm sure he is going to be a hard-working and very effective member for his community.

Mr. Speaker, I was first made aware of this bill when it was introduced by my former colleague and the member's predecessor, Michael Prue. He introduced this bill and it was debated in the Legislature, and I would like to acknowledge the work he has done on this matter.

It went before the committee and we heard from a number of stakeholders. Unfortunately, it died on the order paper because the election was called by the NDP, which Ontarians never wanted and they never deserved. However, Ontarians elected a majority Liberal government, and they have asked us to build Ontario up. The member's initiative is very much along those lines. He has done the smart thing and he has done the right thing to put forward this bill. It's sound public policy.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this bill will provide necessary changes and benefit positively all those who are working in the hospitality industry. As a former small business woman, I fully understand the contributions employees make on an everyday basis to help grow small businesses. I'm fully supportive of anything, any initiative that will benefit employees and their families in a positive way.

So I urge all members of this House to support this bill, because it will benefit many people in the hospitality industry who work very hard—day in, day out—to support themselves, to support their families and strengthen our economy.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Good afternoon, Speaker. Our government is committed to building a strong economy built on fairness, for both workers and business owners. On this side of the House, we understand that when Ontarians tip, they want 100% of it to go to the staff. Servers, hairstylists, tour guides, housekeeping staff and all other workers who earn tips in addition to their wages work hard to earn a decent living, and they deserve to be treated fairly.

Mr. Speaker, as you may recall, the last three versions of this bill were only one line long, which was neither enforceable nor did it take into account all the different types of arrangements that may exist in relation to tips. For example, we needed to ensure that fair practices, such as tip-sharing among staff, are protected. This is where management distributes the total tips between bussers, hostesses and other service support staff, indeed as Milestones does. In addition, in the case of small businesses in which the owner or operators are a key part of the staff, they should be allowed to participate in tip pooling.

We also need to take into account unionized workplaces where collective agreements include tips. Usually, when a union collective agreement is put in place, everyone votes on it and the majority rules. That's why our government worked very hard, in collaboration with the previous member for Beaches–East York, to make improvements to the previous bill while it was before committee. We were pleased to see these amendments made, and we hope that this important bill can move forward to committee once again.

Since 2003, our government has increased the minimum wage by 60%, from \$6.85 to \$11. The specific minimum wage for servers has already risen from \$5.95 to \$9.55, and if our Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act passes, the living standards for workers in the hospitality industry will also increase, as their minimum wage increases annually at the rate of inflation. Now we have one of the highest minimum wages in the country again. It was only fair after nine consecutive years of no increases under previous governments.

The previous bills put forward by the former MPP for Beaches–East York, and his approach that no tips should go to the management in any situation ever, were too simplistic. Aspects of the former MPP's bill ignored certain aspects that the now-MPP for Beaches–East York addresses. Many establishments' waiters and waitresses share some of their tips with bussers, hostesses and other service support staff. Tip-sharing agreements are between the owners and the staff and vary by restaurant, and they should be respected.

There are also small restaurants and large unionized banquet halls, for example, that need to be taken into account. Often in smaller restaurants, where the owner/operators are a crucial part of the staff, they too deserve a share of the tips.

Finally, we needed to account for unionized workplaces where collective agreements include tips.

I agree with the member from Beaches–East York, and I think we should pass this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'm rising on a point of order, just to correct my record. I referred to the member from Kingston and the Islands incorrectly. I meant to refer to the member from Barrie in my remarks, so I apologize for that mistake and I would like to correct my record.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Any member is allowed to correct the record.

The member for Beaches–East York, you have two minutes for a response.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thanks very much to my colleagues from Ottawa–Orléans, Mississauga–Brampton South and Barrie for their kind comments in support of this bill. I appreciate very much the support you give us, as new members and veteran members, to bring this thing forward.

I also would like to thank the member from Kitchener–Conestoga, both for his support of the bill and his support of restaurants in Toronto during Summerlicious.

I'd like to direct my comments to the members from Kitchener–Waterloo and Bramalea–Gore–Malton: Thank you so much for your tribute speech on behalf of the former member from Beaches–East York. I share your affection for him. I've known him for 25 years. He's a great guy. I know he worked hard in the community, and I wish him well in his future endeavours.

I also appreciate your commendations—congratulations on your own elections, but your commendations for

me, having brought this bill forward. Let me say that I brought it forward in tribute, and I brought it forward as a campaign promise. Better than a government bill, I can bring this forward personally. I think it does greater honour, and I look forward to your advice as to how we can move this through committee faster.

What I heard from the members of the official opposition is support for this bill. What I heard from members of the third party was support from this bill—with some minor amendments, possibly, but support for this bill.

I would like to specifically address this collective bargaining issue that arose. Before I get lectured on what's proper labour relation policy, as a rookie, I think veteran MPPs should recognize the fact that I do have a master's in the labour relations field, and I understand this area of law quite well.

Under the Employment Standards Act, there is a question of greater benefit to be taken into consideration. I respect collective bargaining contracts. When I change a law, I want to make sure that we don't unilaterally rip up a collective bargaining agreement, go in there and make changes. Whether it's to benefit the employer or the employee, I respect the sanctity of collective bargaining contracts, and they should as well. It's very important.

1510

When you look at that bill, we don't know what the trade-offs were. We do not know what the trade-offs were with respect to wages, working conditions or hours of work that go along with the tipping policies of a restaurant. So you can't just say that they would get a better benefit. They may have already received a better benefit, and that's how the Employment Standards Act reads. You need to maybe take that course that I designed at Seneca College, which explains these things in very, very clear detail.

So I appreciate your support. I hope we can work together at the committee to make sure—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. We'll take the vote at the end of private members' public business.

ONTARIO BIKE MONTH ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LE MOIS DE LA BICYCLETTE EN ONTARIO

Ms. McMahon moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to proclaim the month of June as Ontario Bike Month / *Projet de loi 13, Loi proclamant le mois de juin Mois de la bicyclette en Ontario.*

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I'm very pleased to have this opportunity to introduce Bill 13, An Act to proclaim the month of June as Ontario Bike Month.

Speaker, I want to start my remarks today by thanking the member for Mississauga—Streetsville for providing

me with the opportunity to introduce this bill, as it was one he rose in the same place and introduced just a few short months ago.

At that time, as many members of this House will know, I was the CEO of the Share the Road Cycling Coalition, Ontario's provincial bicycle policy and advocacy organization. In that capacity, I asked the member for Mississauga—Streetsville if he would consider tabling a private member's bill asking all members of this Legislature to consider supporting a simple idea, one that would allow us all to celebrate cycling in communities across Ontario by declaring June as Ontario Bike Month.

Now, as his colleague, I'm honoured that he has asked me to introduce this legislation, and I would like to thank him for his consideration and generosity. I look forward to his comments, as I do those of my caucus colleagues and those across the aisle, as we debate this legislation. It is also worth noting that the member for Mississauga—Streetsville, as I learned recently, enjoys bicycling, as I know a number of members of this House do as well.

As members will know, several communities across Ontario consider June as bike month already. In fact, Speaker, I'm pleased that a number of key organizations and partners who lead cycling initiatives across our province are here with us today. With your indulgence, I'd like to introduce them: Marlene Koehler, the executive director of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, one of the leading cycling tourism organizations in North America; Teresa Di Felice, director of community and government relations and driver training at CAA South Central Ontario; Jacquelyn Hayward Gulati, the manager of active transportation at the city of Mississauga; and Chris Drew, who lives here in Toronto and is a staunch advocate for cycling at Cycle Toronto. Thank you for being here.

Mr. Speaker, these individuals and organizations undertake and sponsor activities with communities right across our province, initiatives which serve to celebrate the love of bicycling. They also lead activities which encourage people to choose their bikes more often.

From Windsor to Warton, from Cambridge to Caledonia along the Grand River, from Kingston to Westport, from Sarnia to Lake Erie and along the newly minted waterfront trail, to the Greater Niagara Circle Route and along the stunning shores of Lake Ontario, from Mississauga to Mississippi Mills, to my beautiful riding of Burlington and the beauty of the Niagara escarpment, from the Ottawa Valley to our nation's capital and the Quebec border, and west to North Bay and Mattawa, from Manitoulin Island to Sault Ste. Marie and east to Sudbury, in Thunder Bay, Red Lake and along the shores of Georgian Bay, Ontarians are enjoying the simple freedom and convenience of riding their bicycle in growing numbers, and Bill 13 celebrates this fact.

Whether it be Bike to Work Day, Bike to School Day, the Becel Ride for Heart, the Ride to Conquer Cancer or the Manitoulin Passage Ride, there are a number of ways in which Ontarians choose to celebrate the joy of getting

on two wheels instead of four. Indeed, what is there not to like about the opportunity to feel the wind and the warmth of the sun on your face as you experience your community in the best way in which to truly see it: at a human pace from the seat of your bicycle?

Speaker, my own community of Burlington is but one example of a community where a growing number of citizens are choosing to ride for reasons related to economics, convenience, good health or just plain fun. In short, bicycling is, especially for those short trips under five or even 10 kilometres, often the healthiest and most cost-effective way of getting around. The fact is, according to Environment Canada, over 40% of our trips in Canada are under five kilometres. In Burlington, as in most places in Ontario, this is absolutely and eminently doable. Burlington has 49 kilometres of bike lanes, 22.5 kilometres of bike boulevards, 19 kilometres of shared-use paths and 21 kilometres of multi-use paths that provide an excellent array of choices, whether it be on a trail, on the road or along our jewel of a waterfront.

Every day, when I arrive at the GO train station, the bike racks are full. Last night, when I arrived back in my riding by train, I saw a number of folks getting on their bikes, enjoying the opportunity to stretch their legs after the commute home and unwind in the best of ways. All of these are signs and evidence of the fact that bikes are here to stay, and the good news is that a growing number of cities, large and small, are making the accommodation of bicyclists an important priority.

The tabling of this legislation comes at an interesting and exciting time for bicycling in Ontario. Just last year, in my former professional capacity, I had the pleasure of launching CycleON—Ontario's first bicycling strategy in over 20 years—with the member for Toronto Centre, who was then the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure.

Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the member for Toronto Centre for his unwavering support for cycling and his commitment to creating a more bicycle-friendly Ontario. This commitment and, indeed, our government's commitment was reflected by the development of a 20-year vision for cycling in Ontario and an action plan to address five key areas: design healthy, active and prosperous communities; improve cycling infrastructure; make highways and streets safer; promote cycling awareness and behavioural shifts; and increase bicycling tourism opportunities. I look forward to continuing this important work on bicycling policy and legislation with the new Minister of Transportation and all members of this House. Indeed, I'm proud to say that a number of the initiatives outlined in the strategy are already under way.

An important commitment by this government to supporting cycling and one of the most critical is \$25 million in funding for cycling infrastructure contained in the recently tabled budget as part of the government's overall commitment to strategic investments in infrastructure. This funding for municipalities, the first in our province's history, will enhance their ability to keep their

citizens safe and encourage Ontarians to bicycle more often. It will also encourage the development of cycling tourism networks, contributing to economic development and job creation in communities large and small, urban, suburban and rural, too.

Bicycle tourism investments around the world and in fact closer to home in both Quebec and our neighbours to the south have proven to be a huge economic boost. In Quebec, the government there has invested over \$200 million in the Route verte, a 4,300-kilometre route system spanning the province. The economic impact of those investments is clear. Bicycle tourism brings \$134 million to the Quebec economy annually. In addition, cities like Montreal have become one of the most bicycle-friendly in the world.

Further, in the United States, bicycle tourism is a \$49-billion economic item, with a 50,000-mile route system currently under development in a partnership between federal agencies, state local governments and the Adventure Cycling Association, the leading bicycle travel organization in the US with 47,000 members. Closer to home, Ontario is poised to do the same with, again, the cycling strategy leading the way.

Ontario is becoming more bicycle friendly, and the numbers are clear. In yearly provincial polling done by the Share the Road Cycling Coalition, 4% or 540,000 Ontarians are riding a bike every single day in this province. That's a big number. An additional 28% report riding weekly or monthly. So in total, over 4.3 million Ontarians are riding their bikes at least once a week.

There's a pent-up demand for cycling, too. A majority of Ontarians want to ride their bike more often—54%. Topping the list of priorities that will encourage them to do so include investments in infrastructure, more bike lanes and trails; "better infrastructure," 67% of respondents said.

Finally, there's strong support for cycling tourism, too. Some 70% of Ontarians agree that our province should do more to promote cycling tourism so that they can enjoy the beauty of Ontario by bike.

Making cycling safer—making our roads safer—is a priority for, dare I say, most, if not all, of us in this House. In fact, I look forward to the potential of once again debating the safer roads for Ontario act, which contains amendments to the Highway Traffic Act consistent with the recommendations outlined in the coroner's review into cycling deaths.

1520

As many of us know, cycling has enormous benefits. It is a tool for mitigating congestion, lowering health care costs, and the benefits are clear and well documented. In short, there is no better time than now to celebrate bicycling in our province, with numerous initiatives, programs, partnerships and activities under way, all with the express purpose of encouraging Ontarians to cycle more often and celebrate the over half a million Ontarians who ride daily now.

I hope that the members of this House will embrace both the spirit and the intent of this bill as we all work

together to make our communities and our province more bicycle friendly.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm happy to speak on Bill 13, An Act to proclaim the month of June as Ontario Bike Month. Je suis très heureuse de parler au sujet de la bicyclette. Maintenant, je suis la critique pour la francophonie, et je devrais pratiquer mon français. Je vois que tous les Libéraux et les membres du NDP parlent souvent en français. Alors, je vais faire l'effort. I'm going to make the effort, as the francophone critic for the PC Party, to say a few words in French every now and then so that you can see as I improve through my French lessons, as we make progress.

I'm delighted to have the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus today in support of Bill 182, Ontario Bike Month Act.

In the province of Ontario, we're fortunate to have 13,000 kilometres of bike trails and some of the world's most beautiful scenery. Some 1.2 million bike riders take to the roads and trails every year, and that number continues to increase as biking becomes one of the most affordable, convenient and enjoyable methods of transportation.

We all know that there are different people on bicycles. There are people who are just trying get somewhere. It's their main transportation, and it does become a problem in the winter months. There are the hobbyists who have the neat shorts with the extra padding that looks a little silly when they get off the bike—

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Hey!

Mrs. Gila Martow: Not to judge anyone.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: You need that extra padding.

Mrs. Gila Martow: You need that extra padding—well, we'll talk about that a little further. It depends how far you're going on the bike. I've got some of the built-in padding, maybe.

The reality is that we do have to share the roads with cars.

This morning, as I was just about to get onto Avenue Road, a bike came flying right beside me and got snagged in some red construction fencing, some plastic fencing that was loose and caught onto some part of the cyclist. He slammed into the car in front of me. It was that moment when your heart just stops. Luckily, we were all kind of crawling at a red light. If we had been moving quickly, that could have been one of those terrible, tragic stories that we often hear on the news.

I think we really need to make an effort to have the bikes ride safely on our roads.

I know I'm often doing something that isn't really legal—and I hope the police officers, because I'm so short, think I'm a child; with my helmet it's hard to tell, maybe. I ride on the sidewalks. I'm afraid to be on the roads where the cars are going quickly. We're not going to win in an accident between a bicycle and a car.

It's all great to enjoy cycling on the roads, but it has to be appropriate.

I believe it's great to let bicycles on the highways because there are shoulders. Why not allow the cyclists to use those shoulders, as long as they're not in the regular lanes with the cars?

There are roads, such as Eglinton, where there are bike paths, or there are trails not far from Eglinton. Why should we be building bike lanes when there are trails that we could use nearby?

I think the cyclists should really be taken off the major roads whenever possible. But when they do need to be on the major roads, we have to find a way to share the sidewalks. Maybe we don't need to have as wide sidewalks. Maybe we have to look at some of the things that are blocking the way on the sidewalks. Too often, there are garbage cans and things like that that could be put up right against buildings.

Bike Month has taken hold in some of our major cities. I have some notes here that say that in Toronto, Ottawa and Hamilton they're already celebrating June as Bike Month. I think the precedent is there. Obviously, we need to invest in infrastructure throughout the province if we're going to make it a Bike Month for the entire province not just for some of the major cities.

A little bit before, I mentioned tourism when we were talking about the restaurants in Toronto and in Ontario. I think that Toronto could really advance itself as a tourist destination for cyclists around the world. Bicycles are now able to come apart so much easier to take on a plane. I was sent a video of some kind of motorbike that was able to fold up and go into a duffel bag. With the right tools, they're able to take them apart and put them back together.

Maybe we could have better rentals for bikes, not just those clunky looking things but better bikes with helmets. Maybe with room to carry—that's always the issue for people: How do you go shopping and purchase things and bring them back on your bike? It doesn't exactly help our retailers if everybody is coming to their stores on bicycles and saying, "Oh, I would love to buy that, but unfortunately I'm here on a bicycle, so I can't make the purchase." We do have to think about these things and how we can advance bicycles with tourism while providing a safe route for everybody.

Obviously, this is Toronto—we're not living in California—and we do have brutal winters here. Maybe we have to have a system where, in some summer months, we do disrupt the traffic. We find that there is less traffic during the summer months; a lot of people are on vacation. Maybe we could have lanes that are used for bicycles in the summer, but the rest of the year, not so much—they would have to share the roads with the cars. We don't see as many cyclists, certainly up in York region, during the winter months. Maybe it's because we haven't been encouraging it enough, or maybe it's because people just aren't able to manage in the winter months.

I'm in touch with some people in York region, in the city of Vaughan, which is where I live, in the riding of Thornhill. They're called Vaughan BUG; it's a bicycle

club. They're really promoting themselves. I urge people to follow them on Twitter and to look them up. They have a Facebook page. They're trying to organize some events. I'd like to get back on track—the recent election derailed me a bit—to do a ride with a brunch or a picnic and to encourage people.

I have a regular—I guess I'd call it a hybrid bike, where it's not a race bike and it's not a mountain bike. But now we're seeing a lot of electric bikes. I think that that's going to be the challenge for all of us in the Legislature. How are we going to deal with these electric bikes? They're not scooters, and they're not motorcycles, but they aren't exactly bicycles. Too often people find ways to skirt the laws. I think we're much better off to see the future of cycling and to make the changes that we need in our regulations so that we can anticipate all the future problems.

I noticed, coming down to Queen's Park from my riding of Thornhill, that it is downhill most of the way, which is a fun way to bike. I've thought about it, but the problem is how to get home when it's uphill most of the way. Electric bikes, I believe that every time you brake, you're charging the battery, just like an electric car. The battery life is about 30 minutes, from my understanding, and that will help you get up the hill. Then when you're riding on more level ground, you're recharging the battery. I'm hoping that that's something I can try out in the near future.

I will be going to Colorado to visit a friend near Vail to do some cycling, which I've done for the last three summers, at the end of this month, since the Legislature won't be in session. It's a wonderful place, Colorado. Basically they have bike trails between towns, from town to town, with community centre sort of little hubs in between that you can stop at. You can get some water, and there's a washroom, and there's vending machines and little parks and benches and things like that.

The bike trails actually make use of the golf courses, which kind of surprised me because I always thought the golf courses wouldn't allow that. But you're wearing the bike helmet, so you're pretty safe from the golf balls, so it sort of makes sense. Maybe it's something that we could look at here, allowing cyclists to somehow use all of our many golf courses, and speak to the golf courses about what would be involved in that. They'd get some visitors to their clubhouse for food and things like that, so maybe they'd like it.

1530

Lots to talk about, but I'm going to leave some time for somebody else from the PC caucus to speak. I'm really looking forward to some new legislation on bicycle riding and to celebrating the next June as Bike Month in Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: There is so much work to be done on the cycling portfolio, so much work. We can all agree on that. It has been a long time coming.

I, too, want to acknowledge the good people from CAA. I have to tell you, the research that they provide is

of the highest calibre. We've come to depend on it—a valuable partner on this file, and happy to see you here today.

It is a pleasure to rise today to speak about another piece of legislation inspired by the hard work of another New Democrat, Jonah Schein. In this case, he was a tireless advocate on this file. He was an endearing social justice advocate in this place. We will miss his activism.

We will, of course, be supporting any progressive move on the cycling portfolio. I wanted to start off by saying that.

It is important, though, also to acknowledge the history on this file. Mr. Jonah Schein, of course, proposed this private member's bill to create Bike Month back in 2012. His Bicycle Month Act would have also designated each June as Bike Month. If anyone was listening to previous debate on Bill 12, this of course will sound familiar. Jonah's bill was never debated because Premier McGuinty prorogued the Legislature, and over 100 pieces of legislation died on the order paper because the heat got too hot in this House and we needed to take a break, Mr. McGuinty, who now has been welcomed back in the fold. So we've moved on. On this side of the House, we're trying to move on.

New Democrats have been strong advocates, obviously, for a real cycling strategy, with timelines and with targets to increase ridership and funding commitments, to ensure needed objectives for cycling infrastructure, safety and awareness are met. I must remind this chamber that it was the NDP that created Ontario's first cycling strategy, way back in 1992. But today, after two Tory governments and 11 years of Liberal government—actually, 12 now—Ontario's cycling infrastructure investments continue to lag behind other provinces like BC and Quebec. We should look to those jurisdictions for leadership. They have great models. I know the member from Burlington knows this, because she has been talking to this Legislature for almost 12 years on this issue. There is room for improvement; let's agree on that. So June Bike Month—some progress.

The bill before us today would make each June Bike Month in Ontario. We do need to create a space in this province to talk more about what is needed to protect cyclists' safety. It is certainly important symbolically to recognize bikes and cycling, but the symbolism needs to translate into action. Ontarians deserve more transportation options and relief from congestion. Biking is a great way to both avoid and reduce congestion. But in order to make cycling safer and therefore more appealing as an alternative to the car, we need more cycling infrastructure. Cycling infrastructure is crucial to support active living, sustainable transit. The reason why we must take the time to mark Bike Month every June is because this provincial government absolutely must do more to raise awareness. Raising awareness is a good place to start, so obviously we will be supporting this month.

There are so many good reasons to support increased cycling safety in the province of Ontario. In 2012, the deputy chief coroner concluded an investigation, A

Review of All Accidental Cycling Deaths in Ontario From January 1st, 2006 to December 31st, 2010. There are four recommendations I'd like to bring to the House's attention. They examined 129 cycling deaths over a five-year period, including 16 children. Two thirds of these deaths occurred in urban areas. Eighty-six per cent of those killed were male. "The vast majority of cycling deaths occurred during clear weather, on dry roads, with good visibility."

The deputy chief coroner made 14 recommendations, including—I'm not going to go through them all—the adoption of the "complete streets" approach, so we know that when we plan for cycling, cyclists are safer; the legislative change under the Highway Traffic Act, the Municipal Act and relevant municipal bylaws aimed at ensuring clarity and consistency regarding interactions with cyclists and other road users; and the implementation of mandatory helmet legislation for cyclists of all ages. Actually, I'd like just to mention the former member for Kitchener Centre, Mr. Milloy. He brought forward this piece of legislation back when I was a trustee. I was supportive of it then; I'm supportive of it now.

The establishment of a one-metre rule for vehicles when passing cyclists: The member for Parkdale–High Park has brought this forward, as has the former member Jonah Schein.

The NDP has consistently called for numerous changes to improve cycling infrastructure, from complete streets, to side guards, to a review of the Highway Traffic Act, to clarity of the mandate of public health officers to include health and safety in the built environment. These are long-standing recommendations.

So while I think it's amazingly powerful and empowering for the member from Burlington to bring forward this piece of legislation—it must feel very good to have been an activist and an advocate and then to be here in this house and bringing forward this piece of legislation—these are long-standing requests that need direct action. While I'm happy to contribute to this debate on the bill to enact Ontario Bike Month, cycling advocates like the new member from Burlington will know how much New Democrats have tried to push this Liberal government to make—

Interjections.

Ms. Catherine Fife: You know what would be helpful, member for St. Catharines? If you actually listened instead of heckled, that would be helpful.

In fact, the member from Burlington knows better than most because she has paid close attention to the comments of New Democrats over the years. I know this personally because she took some of the comments that I made in this House and some of the comments made by the former member for Davenport, Jonah Schein, and they were included in some of your election material under all-party support. I know the previous member, Frank Klees, took exception to this.

I still stand by those words. When I talked about the advocacy and the courage that it takes to push this

government to do what they said they were going to do in the first place on cycling safety—I stand by those words here. I will stand by those words for a long, long time.

But what we need is action on cycling safety. So it is my pleasure, my privilege, to support June as Ontario Bike Month because it has been a long time coming. It could be a government bill, but it's important that we all acknowledge that this is a first step in the province of Ontario, one of many going forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Bob Delaney: It is a pleasure to stand and to support the efforts of my colleague, the new member for Burlington, an outstanding member in just the very short time she has been here. It was also my pleasure, not that many weeks ago, to have introduced very much the same bill. The operative part of this bill can be summed up in a single sentence: This act designates June as Ontario Bike Month. That's it. That's all there is in the bill.

I think the beauty in the bill is in what it empowers people to do. For example, it will enable groups of cyclists to educate other cyclists and motorists to enhance safety when they're on the road. It reminds people to be aware of cyclists. It encourages people to take up cycling.

To give you an idea of just how widespread cycling is in our province, if one were to compare, as the member for Burlington did in talking about how many people are regular cyclists—if that were compared to some of our dynamic multicultural communities, it would be like adding together the Italian community and the Chinese community and the Indian community, and even then, the number of cyclists would exceed that. That just gives you an idea of scale, of how many Ontarians are avid, active cyclists.

Speaker, we've got some members who really want to weigh in on this with some of their thoughts, and I thank you for the time. I especially thank the new member for Burlington for having brought forth this bill. I look forward to its passage and its proclamation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to join in the debate today. I think all of us recognize the value of the bill before us today and the kind of impact that it has. I am particularly aware of the increase in bike paths and the kind of opportunity that provides for families and individuals in safe biking.

1540

I think that's really where I want to concentrate my comments this afternoon, because I'm in a car and I am terrified of bikes. They often do not follow the rules of the road. They go across in the middle of a red light.

The other day, I was right here at the corner of Wellesley and Queen's Park Crescent, and a bicycle came within inches of knocking down a pedestrian because the bicyclist was going to go across on the red light and just barely missed the person who was legally stepping off the curb to cross the road.

This is far more frequent than it should be, so I hope that one of the impacts of this, assuming that it is to pass

here, will be to encourage those bicyclists to actually follow the rules of the road. Another one again was further over on Gerrard. Again, a bicycle turned in right in front of a pedestrian and said, "Oh, sorry!" and kept on going. But fortunately, the pedestrian was all right.

I know in my case that biking is very popular in my neighbourhood, but there is a great concern about the lack of safety for people using a road that has an 80-kilometre speed limit, and it has no shoulders. It has farm equipment, it has big trucks. It's an alternate for a very busy road with many traffic lights, so therefore people all use the road without the traffic lights. I think it's critically dangerous.

I think that taking a hold of those realities is something that June Bike Month should do. At the same time, I think there is a tremendous opportunity to promote tourism, safe biking, and building more and more bike paths throughout the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Before I begin, I want to start off by congratulating the member from Burlington on her election and also congratulating her on her dedication as a cycle advocate, and for bringing forward this bill. I think it's a great initiative and I want to congratulate you for it. I also want to take some time to acknowledge the great work of our previous member from Davenport and his cycling advocacy.

I also want to join in welcoming the other cycling advocates who are here today. Thank you for your continued work. It's a job or a duty that is often unsung and doesn't get a lot of respect, or doesn't get a lot of the attention and praise that you deserve, so this is one chance where at least I and some of the people in this House can take an opportunity to thank you for your great work and encourage you to continue doing it.

While the bill is simple in the fact that it's setting forth a month to celebrate cycling, what it does—and I think what some of the members have alluded to—it can be a great vehicle, pun intended, to encourage and promote the idea of cycling, and to look at our culture and the way that we have focused, or not focused enough, on cycling.

I think that cycling provides a great opportunity to combine a number of issues. If we look at some of the concerns that we're facing right now in our society, there are concerns around health, there are concerns around the environment and there are concerns around transportation and transportation gridlock. Cycling offers a great solution to all three of these issues. It's a time when not only can we look for solutions around these three quite different issues; it also provides an opportunity where all three—urban, suburban and rural—communities can agree that cycling is something that can benefit all of these communities. It's something that matters to people, whether you live in an urban centre, a suburban community or in the rural communities.

But what we need to do—and I think some of the comments have really raised this issue—is we need to really look at cycling and consider as a society what

value we place on it. How important is it? Because if we acknowledge that cycling is something that really helps out our health, if we acknowledge that cycling is something that can actually have a positive impact on our environment by decreasing the amount of reliance on vehicles, and if we acknowledge that more cycling and encouraging cycling will actually improve gridlock, then we should, in our culture and in the way that we view cycling, put it as a priority. So we don't consider it a battle between cars and bicycles and concern ourselves with whether they're following the laws or not. Of course we want to encourage safety and encourage that everyone follows certain parameters to make sure cycling is safe. But if we really value cycling as a solution to these different issues and we really recognize that it's an issue that matters to all of these three different, disparate communities, then we should start shifting our view of cycling and say, "Listen, the fact that someone's cycling—they're actually doing me a benefit if I'm in a car." They're actually benefitting the environment because they're not another car on the road. They're actually taking care of their health and, indirectly, improving our health care system because they're taking the initiative to improve their own health, which would put less burden on the health care system.

If we look at cycling as actually doing all of us a favour, that more cyclists on the road means a better and safer, healthier society in general, then I think we would have less of the issues around whether cycling is cutting into our roads and whether there's this concern between drivers and cyclists. If I see someone riding down the street on a bicycle, I should look at that, we should all look at that as they're doing a great civic duty. They're helping out our society in a number of different ways. I think that's something that we can use this Bike Month for, as a vehicle to encourage and promote the concepts around prioritizing cycling in our society.

The other very important thing that we can use Bike Month for—and I think it's so important—is that while we celebrate cycling and while we can encourage and promote it, we also need to back that up with specific investments in infrastructure. We need to make sure that cycling is something that's not only encouraged and celebrated, but something that's easy to do. We've found very often that one of the mantras of health is that if you make the healthy choice the easier choice, more people will then take that healthy choice. Similarly, if we make cycling or other alternate forms of transportation the easier choice, we'll see more people take up cycling. I think that requires a real investment on the part of the province, on the part of all levels of government to ensure that we can actually promote this very healthy and very important activity.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: Mr. Speaker, let me take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment to the Chair. It's good to see you back there.

I'm pleased today to stand in support of Bill 13, An Act to proclaim the month of June as Ontario Bike

Month. I'd first like to congratulate the member from Burlington on her election. We've known each other for quite some time. I know that she's going to be a great addition to our caucus and to this Legislature, and I congratulate her on that. I know the people of Burlington will be well served by you.

I also know that she's been a very dedicated advocate for safe cycling, a tireless advocate, and she's brought this to this Legislature. I know she cares very deeply about Ontario's cycling strategy, and I commend her for that. I commend her for making this a priority coming into the Legislature. She's been here three weeks and she's already putting forward a bill, and that's to be commended as well.

In my community of Ottawa South and across Ottawa, cycling has grown exponentially, from people riding to work to recreational cyclists. You just don't see it on the roads; you see it in the number of bike shops that are popping up along Bank Street and actually all over Ottawa and Ottawa South.

I'm very proud that the city of Ottawa has a cycling strategy and in the last two years alone has invested \$18 million in cycling initiatives across the city. Most recently, in my riding the city opened a recreational path along Sawmill Creek between Hunt Club and Riverside, which will help cyclists get downtown on a stretch of road, the Airport Parkway, which I've ridden before. It would be better to not ride that. So I commend them on doing that. In fact, in Ottawa we have bike Sundays. They have that across many communities in our province, where the parkways and pathways are open Sunday mornings for family cycling. It's a great activity. I also commend the NCC, the National Capital Commission, for taking that initiative. Often the NCC gets criticized, but it's really a great initiative that's been going on for I don't know how many years.

But Ottawa is a very bike-friendly city, and I am really very proud of our mayor and our city council for the initiative they've taken. The comprehensive cycling strategy for 2013 is available.

I'm a recreational cyclist. I'm now going to be a little bit more sensitive after the comments from the member from Thornhill, but I ride. I ride in the city. I ride in the country. I like long rides. Cycling is my way of clearing my head. I love riding. It also gives you a feeling of freedom.

1550

I'm also very aware of the dangers of cycling. I have had a few close calls myself. In my riding of Ottawa South, there is a memorial on the corner of Bank and Riverside for a woman named Meg Dussault, who tragically lost her life last year. It's a white bicycle memorial. Her family takes care of it very well, and it's very noticeable. It's a great memorial. It would be good if we saw fewer of those memorials, and I think that Bike Month is an important step in that direction.

Proclaiming June as Ontario Bike Month will help us in making sure that cyclists, drivers and pedestrians understand what it means to share the road and what their

responsibilities are. It will also help us to promote healthy and active lifestyles; it would be good for our health care system. It will get more cars off the road, which is good for our environment.

It will also be an opportunity for us to promote cycle tourism. That will be great for wine country and in the more rural areas of our province. I think that's a real benefit in the tourism sector that we're just beginning to reap.

In closing, I believe that this is a bill that we can all support. What I've heard on both sides of the Legislature is that people support this. Different people at different times have brought this type of idea forward, or other legislation in that regard. So I encourage everybody to support this bill. I congratulate the member.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you to the member from Burlington for asking me to speak on this very important issue, Bill 13, the Ontario Bike Month Act. I want to congratulate the member from Burlington on her hard work on this and on her win. It's a privilege for me to lend my voice in support of another member, and a good friend from the Halton region, by bringing this matter forward.

The health and fitness of Ontario residents is crucial to the overall success and well-being of our society. Healthy bodies lead to healthy minds and communities. Cycling is a fun and easy way for people young and old to enjoy the outdoors while also getting some valuable exercise.

I know this first-hand, because my family have been avid cyclists for many years. For years, my husband and children have been biking along the beautiful roads and trails in Halton. Whether it's going to ride along the winding roads through the escarpment or on the stunning trails at one of our local conservation areas, our family has done it all.

We have been involved in cycling for years because my husband, Randy, and our kids, Galen and Oriana, have regularly spent their summers and winters training for the MS Bike Tour. It's part of our family's yearly commitment to raise funds for multiple sclerosis. The close-to-200-kilometre bike tour—which is an overnight tour, by the way—in support of MS Canada is a truly great event for a truly great cause. It is the highlight of our summer.

The region of Halton is the perfect place to cycle, whether you're training for an event or just trying to get some exercise. It is one of the most bicycle-friendly areas in the province. In fact, Burlington, Oakville and Halton Hills have all been designated bicycle-friendly communities since 2011, and I understand that Milton is also submitting a plan to be designated as a bicycle-friendly community.

With a brand new state-of-the-art velodrome being constructed in Milton for next year's Pan/Parapan American Games, Halton will truly become one of the foremost cycling centres in North America. It will be a cycling mecca. The velodrome will be the first of its kind

in Canada, and it is already attracting a vibrant cycling community to the riding.

New infrastructure that will engage cyclists and businesses throughout our community is being built every day, and these investments will benefit the people of our community for generations to come. They will ensure that cycling remains a safe and supported activity for local residents. By declaring June Bike Month in Ontario, this bill will help to promote a healthy lifestyle for Ontarians. It will encourage people of all ages to get out and see our beautiful back roads and green spaces from the seat of their bikes. I can't think of a better way to enjoy our stunning countryside, get some exercise and spend time with family. Bike Month will engage Ontario families in an important, fun and easy way to get outside and get fit. It will also reduce the number of vehicles on our roads and get people moving.

I think this is a great private member's bill, and I want to thank the Burlington member for her hard work on this and for bringing it forward. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Davenport.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I'm proud to speak in favour of Bill 13, introduced by my colleague the member for Burlington, entitled An Act to proclaim the month of June as Ontario Bike Month.

Ontarians are avid cyclists. We can be proud that Ontario has the second-lowest cycling injury rate of all Canadian provinces. We benefit from an existing network of bike paths that provides recreation or a commute to work for thousands of Ontarians.

But we can do better. That's why I'm proud to be part of the government that introduced, to much acclaim, CycleON: Ontario's Cycling Strategy, developed in partnership with cycling stakeholder groups such as Cycle Toronto, a group that is active in my riding of Davenport. The strategy calls for a new way of thinking about how we promote cycling.

Why is the strategy important? Of course, everyone knows that cycling is good for you. It's exercise that you can do with your family and you can carry on throughout your life. This new way of thinking in CycleON means more than just increased funding; it means a change of mindset where we share the road.

These changes were proposed in government legislation inspired by private members' bills tabled by MPPs from both sides of the floor, which is evidence of growing all-party support. This wide support makes sense, given that the results of province-wide surveys show an increased level of support for a road-sharing approach in transportation planning and a greater focus generally on cycling infrastructure investments.

The member for Burlington's bill not only reflects our government's commitment to cycling, but also recognizes the tireless work by cycling advocates across Ontario.

For these reasons, I proudly stand in support of the member for Burlington's bill, and I encourage members from both sides of the floor to join me in supporting it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Burlington, you have two minutes for a response.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I was so encouraged by the comments. I want to highlight and thank the members from Thornhill, Kitchener–Waterloo, Mississauga–Streetsville, York–Simcoe, Bramalea–Gore–Malton, Ottawa South, Halton—my neighbour—and Davenport.

J'aimerais féliciter, entre autres, la députée de Thornhill pour son élection. Et, à l'occasion de parler en français avec elle, félicitations.

Sharing the road, as the member for Thornhill mentioned, is a priority for all sides of this House, and I think that was outlined in all of the comments today. The member mentioned paved shoulders, and I'd like, in response to that, to thank the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka for his private member's bill and his staunch work in this area. That private member's bill, the member will be happy to know, has been embodied and embraced, in the spirit of sharing the road and sharing great ideas, and will be brought forward as part of the Keeping Ontario's Roads Safe Act, which the Minister of Transportation, I understand, will reintroduce this fall. I look forward to more conversations with the members in that regard.

There's not enough time, of course, to expand on all the ideas that you put forward, many of which resonated, but I would just underscore that cycling in the winter does happen, and in some of the greatest countries where cycling is so frequent and so much a part of daily transportation, notably the Nordic countries, for a good time of the year there it's winter, actually, and they do accommodate cyclists. So there's a growing global conversation. In fact, I attended a winter cycling congress in Winnipeg this year to look at cycling in winter, to look at the numbers of cyclists who ride now and those who want to and what it's going to take for us to accommodate them. So thank you.

There were lots of other comments from the member for Kitchener–Waterloo. I just want to close and thank her for her cycling advocacy—she was the co-chair of our cycling caucus in the last House and is a fabulous advocate for cycling—and finally, the former member from Davenport for his inspiration as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

RADON AWARENESS AND PREVENTION ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION AU RADON ET LA PROTECTION CONTRE L'INFILTRATION DE CE GAZ

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will deal first with ballot item number 1, standing in the name of Mr. Qaadri.

Mr. Qaadri has moved second reading of Bill 11, An Act to raise awareness about radon, provide for the

Ontario Radon Registry and reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—Mr. Qaadri?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Speaker, for your support, and to all members. I refer it to the Standing Committee on General Government.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member wishes the bill to be referred to general government. Agreed? Agreed.

PROTECTING EMPLOYEES'

TIPS ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA PROTECTION DU POURBOIRE DES EMPLOYÉS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Potts has moved second reading of Bill 12, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to tips and other gratuities.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is referred to—Mr. Potts?

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you to all the members of the House who indicated support for the bill. I would like to refer the bill to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member wishes it to be referred to Legislative Assembly. Agreed? Agreed.

ONTARIO BIKE MONTH ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LE MOIS DE LA BICYCLETTE EN ONTARIO

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Ms. McMahon has moved second reading of Bill 13, An Act to proclaim the month of June as Ontario Bike Month.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is referred to—the member for Burlington?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I'd like to thank all members of this House for their conversations today and their input to this legislation and for their support. I would ask that this bill be sent to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that the bill be referred to the social policy committee. Agreed? Agreed.

Orders of the day? Minister without Portfolio.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The Minister without Portfolio has moved adjournment of the House. Agreed? Agreed.

This House stands adjourned until Monday, the 21st, 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1602.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
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Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
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Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Cimino, Joe (NDP)	Sudbury	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glenarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Emie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
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MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
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McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton–Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa–Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
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Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke–Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
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Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
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Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener–Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
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Cindy Forster, Michael Harris
Randy Hillier, Sophie Kiwala
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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Jennifer K. French, Monte Kwinter
Amrit Mangat, Kathryn McGarry
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Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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Christine Elliott, France Gélinas
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Peter Tabuns
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des services aux personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle**

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Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon
Cheri DiNovo, Christine Elliott
Sylvia Jones, Jack MacLaren
Cristina Martins, Monique Taylor
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First Session, 41st Parliament

Assemblée législative
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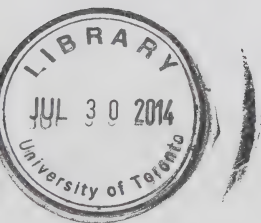
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Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 21 July 2014

Lundi 21 juillet 2014



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 21 July 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 21 juillet 2014

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to introduce two very special guests who are visiting question period for the very first time. As I say their names, I'm going to ask them if they can stand up.

First of all, my nephew Darius Faizani and my niece Larisa Faizani are here for the first time. They live in New York state, so it's very exciting to have them.

They are accompanied by my sister Elia Naqvi; a good friend of our family, Mrs. Nuzhat Shah; and my mother, Qaisar Naqvi.

They're all here at Queen's Park. Welcome.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I have the honour of introducing four very special guests who are in the House with us today. We have Steve Andrusiak, president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Ontario provincial council; Jim Jacuta, former president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress for Alberta; Myroslava Oleksiuk, who is my mother, but also an election observer in Ukraine; and George Foty, also someone who has been an election observer in Ukraine and who actually headed up the responsibilities for observing the Ternopil region, which is the equivalent of a province in Ukraine, during the most recent elections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would like to welcome Dylan Atack and Steve Vacon, who are here visiting Queen's Park to watch question period. You can see they are Ticat employees, aficionados and fans. Welcome, Dylan and Steve.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It gives me great honour this morning to introduce four visitors. My wife, Gale Simko-Hatfield; my daughter-in-law, Lisa; and our two oldest granddaughters, Paisley and Arwen, are here.

Hon. Reza Moridi: I'm very pleased to introduce my friend and constituent Dr. Ali Nikjoo. He just came back from Africa, being there for about three weeks as a volunteer physician, treating patients. Welcome back to Toronto.

Mr. Bob Delaney: On behalf of the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, who has the privilege of having page Gabriel Chemla from his riding, I'd like to introduce his father, David Chemla, who is in the public gallery this morning.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm pleased to welcome Judy Scannell, who is here today; she's a teacher at Stewart-town Public School. Welcome, Judy.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm happy to introduce Mark Tishman and Will Eborlee, two great staff from my constituency office in St. Paul's.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: They're not here yet because we certainly need infrastructure in the middle of the Don Valley, but soon they'll be here: my wife, Diane; my daughter, Maria, and five of my nine grandkids, Lucas, Madeline, Monica, Maddox and Morgan. They will be here, obviously, sometime today.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Also in the west members' gallery today is my legislative assistant Denny Timm.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I'm very pleased to welcome to the Legislative Assembly today, from Thunder Bay, my son Dustin and his girlfriend, my secret weapon in the last provincial election, Christina Foresto. Welcome.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Please welcome, joining us in the gallery today, the family of page captain Emma Hébert. Her mother Eva Bak Hébert and brother Jasper Hébert are here in the public gallery this morning. Thank you very much for supporting your sister.

AIRLINE DISASTER

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Etobicoke Centre on a point of order.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I rise on a point of order today, Mr. Speaker. On Thursday, Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 was shot down over rebel-controlled territory in eastern Ukraine. On that flight were 298 passengers, scores of children and three infants, all of whom lost their lives.

One of the people who lost their lives was a gentleman by the name of Andrei Anghel. He was from my colleague Joe Dickson's riding of Ajax-Pickering. He was a medical student who was going on vacation to celebrate graduating from his second year of medical school.

I believe that all our thoughts and prayers are with the victims, their families and the Ukrainian people at this time. I rise to ask for unanimous consent in this House for a moment of silence to honour the victims of this tragedy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Etobicoke Centre is seeking unanimous consent to pay homage to the victims of the flight. Do we agree? Agreed.

I would ask all members in the entire House and in the gallery to please rise and join us in a moment of silence.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Our sympathies to the families. May they rest in peace.
It is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Premier. Premier, Ontario was once the economic engine of Canada, and now we're a have-not province. Just last month alone we lost 34,000 additional jobs in the private sector.

During the election campaign, you avoided discussion about the huge fiscal mess that your government has created and that we're now facing as a province. Your campaign focused on spending promises that you claimed would bolster our economy. But now that the votes are counted, you're both spending and raising taxes. This time it's the aviation fuel tax. The executive director of the National Airlines Council of Canada says that this puts Ontario at a competitive disadvantage.

So I ask you Premier, how can you possibly justify putting this province at a further competitive disadvantage just to pay for your pricey campaign promises?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I have said a number of times, there is a fundamental disagreement between us and the opposition, Mr. Speaker. We believe that investing in transit is a very important part of the building up of this province and the future economic growth. The reality is that in order to be able to invest in transit and transportation infrastructure, there is a need to put a modest increase on the tax rate on aviation fuel, one cent a litre for four years.

I would just say that these investments in transit and transportation infrastructure actually help and support the aviation industry. The Union Pearson Express is a really good example of that. As Minister of Transportation, I visited Pearson airport, had a tour, and saw exactly how the passengers are going to be assisted by that investment in transit.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Again to the Premier: Premier, the only passengers who are going to be assisted are those passengers who go to Buffalo airport, so I hope you'll build good infrastructure and good roads to Buffalo, because you have certainly become their economic champion, not ours.

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Fred Lazar of York University concluded that the tax hike will hurt the Ontario economy, cut jobs and drive away tourists. He said that the provincial GDP would fall between \$67 million and \$97 million by 2017, result in a decrease of up to 2,907 full-time jobs and discourage at least 292,000 air travellers.

Premier, you say that you have a jobs plan to grow the economy but you implement policies, like the aviation fuel tax, which hurt the economy and cause job losses,

especially in our tourism industry. Will you commit today to putting that tax hike on hold until you fully study all the implications of it, particularly with respect to the job losses that we can expect?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, let's be clear on exactly what we're talking about. The cost difference that consumers see between Canadian and US fares, which is apparently what he's talking about, is largely attributable to federal—and the airline's own surcharges.

Let's just do a comparison—and remember that this aviation fuel tax in Ontario has not been changed since 1992. At 2.7—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Haldimand–Norfolk, when I stand, it gets quiet.

Carry on, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Ontario's aviation fuel tax is significantly lower than these comparisons: London, Heathrow, 69.6 cents per litre—remember, Ontario's is 2.7 cents per litre—Paris, de Gaulle, 54.6 cents; New York, JFK, 5.7 cents per litre; Chicago, O'Hare, 5.7 cents; and Manitoba—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Back to the Premier: This morning people went to work on the ramp in Red Lake, and as baggage handlers in Windsor and at the customer service desk in the airport in Ottawa. Across our province, jobs depend on the aviation industry, but with your new tax hikes those jobs are at risk. You're setting the stage for more job losses—needless job losses—across our province.

British Columbia, New Brunswick, Alberta, Quebec and Saskatchewan have all eliminated the international aviation fuel tax. They've recognized that a healthy aviation industry means more jobs. Yet with your government's first budget, you are about to put those jobs at risk.

Premier, do you know or do you care how many jobs you're putting at risk and how many will be lost as a result of the full implementation by 2017?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I guess I would ask the Leader of the Opposition whether he knows and whether he cares that we need to make investments in transportation and transit infrastructure. He mentioned Red Lake. It's very important that the roads and bridges in our northern and rural communities are in good shape, so that kind of investment is necessary.

I will say to the Leader of the Opposition that I am concerned about some of the small northern airports. So I have asked that we look at those particular situations to see if there is a way of mitigating for those very small communities.

But overall, we are competitive. The investments in transit and transportation infrastructure that are necessary in this province will create economic growth and economic well-being in the future.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is to the Premier. Premier, last week you insisted that the province would commit \$1 billion to the Ring of Fire, even though page 288 of your own budget reads that the funding will be contingent on the federal government matching the amount. I think you would agree that \$1 billion is a lot of money to request without providing a detailed spending plan.

Infrastructure is key to developing the Ring of Fire and will be a huge asset for First Nation communities who call the region home. Premier, could you please explain your plan for how this \$1 billion is to be spent? Specifically, will it be on a road or a rail link? Will it be on an east-west or a north-south corridor?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would have to ask the member opposite if he is asking as a representative of Stephen Harper or whether he's asking as a representative of a northern community in Ontario, because the reality is we need that investment. We need the infrastructure built.

We have committed to setting up a development corporation that would include all of the parties, and we very much hope that the federal government is at the table, because in order for that infrastructure to be completely developed and in order for those chromite and mineral deposits to be realized, we need everyone working together.

We have committed \$1 billion. We are firm in that commitment. We will work to set up a development corporation.

So if the member opposite is speaking for Stephen Harper, I hope he will let him know that we would like to have him at the table.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: Again to the Premier: No, Premier, I'm asking about your plan. I didn't hear a response to my question.

In November, as Cliffs Resources was about to idle their operations, you rushed to announce the establishment of a new development corporation. In February, it was revealed that the development corporation wasn't even incorporated and that you would instead pay Deloitte to work out the details. Now you say it will be a done deal in just over a month.

Premier, considering your government's track record on this file, why should anyone trust that you can meet this target that you set for yourself?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: In fact, Mr. Speaker—
Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward—Hastings will come to order.
Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: In fact, Mr. Speaker, we have made huge progress on this file. I don't know whether the member opposite, in his haste to come up with a question that really doesn't take into account all of the work that has been done, realizes that the work that

has been done to get in place a framework agreement with the Matawa First Nations is a hugely significant piece of the puzzle in terms of making sure that everyone—all of the communities—can take part.

The development corporation, which is in the process of being established, will allow First Nations, the businesses, the federal government and the provincial government to take part in getting that infrastructure built.

The building blocks are in place, and we hope very much that the federal government is interested in taking part in that process.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Norm Miller: Again to the Premier: Considering your missed targets in the past, this is hardly convincing.

In 2012, you would have thought the Ring of Fire would be producing now, if you were to believe your government's own press releases. On May 9 of that year, you proclaimed that there were "Thousands of Jobs Coming to Northern Ontario." It has now been over six months since Cliffs has idled their project in the region, and it's even more clear now that there was no concrete plan to back up your empty promise.

Premier, will you admit that you still have no plan to make the Ring of Fire a job-creating reality for Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, it's a bit rich, coming from a member of a party that had nothing in their platform, no money in their platform, for the development of the Ring of Fire—absolutely no process in terms of including all of the communities, bringing in the federal government and the companies, and making a concrete investment in infrastructure.

I am very confident that the work we have done already in the north, the work that we are doing in order to set up the development corporation, and our outreach to the federal government in the hopes that they will come forward as they have with the oil sands, as they have in Newfoundland and Labrador—my hope is that they will see that this is a national project.

Nonetheless, we are going ahead. We are working to set up the development corporation, because we believe that this is an opportunity that will benefit not just the region, not just the province, but the country.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Will the Premier agree that financial uncertainty and confusion around the province's state of affairs is not in the best interests of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Indeed, we are moving ahead to reintroduce the budget that we ran on, that we introduced at the beginning of May. We are working very, very hard to make sure that there is exactly that certainty, that understanding of the investments that are necessary, the understanding that we are tackling our fiscal situation. All of that is contained within our budget, and that certainty is exactly what we aspire to as we work to get the budget through the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, tough questions are being asked about that budget, and not just by New Democrats. The Globe and Mail says, "There's a lot of confusion about the budget...." Moody's calls it "credit negative." Even the finance minister admits that there are skeptics who simply do not believe the government's fiscal plan.

Now, does this Premier think that it's okay that there is skepticism and confusion around the province's finances when we already face considerable challenges in this province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that there's a lot of skepticism and confusion around the NDP's support, or lack of support, for the issues that we have addressed in this budget.

So I would ask the leader of the third party whether she supports a \$2.5-billion Jobs and Prosperity Fund, whether she supports the investments in infrastructure—the transit, transportation, hospitals and schools—\$130 billion in public infrastructure investments, \$11.4 billion in hospital expansions, whether she supports the made-in-Ontario retirement pension plan, whether she supports increasing the Ontario Child Benefit, and whether she supports \$810 million to support adults with developmental disabilities. Does she support those initiatives? I think it is a very legitimate question to ask her.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: One of the things I think that is true in this Legislature regardless of which side you sit on is that nobody—nobody—wants to see a downgrade in our province's credit rating, and New Democrats certainly don't want to see cuts to hospitals and schools or more job losses for the people of this province. That's why it's time to actually clear up the uncertainty and confusion surrounding the government's budget.

In 2004, the Premier supported a law that allows the Auditor General to review the government's estimates and assumptions for the coming years, something that the auditor did in 2007 and something that the auditor did in 2011. Will the Premier join me today in calling for the Auditor General to review the government's fiscal plan and clear the air with a public report on her findings?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The Auditor General, in due course, will look at all aspects of our financial situation.

Mr. Speaker, the leader of the third party is grasping at any justification that she can find to vote against our budget. She ran on a fiscal platform that was identical to ours except she said that she would find \$600 million more on top of what we had already said we were going to do in terms of investments.

The reality is that the initiatives contained in this budget are initiatives that I think we have a legitimate reason to ask the leader of the third party whether she supports or not. Expanding low-income benefits, \$20 million for expanding the Student Nutrition Program, \$42

million to prevent and reduce homelessness, \$50 million for a new Local Poverty Reduction Fund, wage increases for personal support workers: Does she or does she not think those are worth—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek will come to order.

Mr. Paul Miller: What did I say?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I don't need rebuttal.

New question?

FISCAL REVIEW

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Premier. I hope for an answer this time.

In the throne speech, the government committed to "choose partnership over partisanship." Today, she can do the right thing and ask the Auditor General to look at the estimates and assumptions of the fiscal plan and set the story straight. Only that independent assurance will provide the clarity that investors and credit rating agencies need to see, and only that clarity will help secure the hospitals and schools that our families rely on.

My question, again, to the Premier: Will she do the right thing and ask the Auditor General to review the books?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We introduced a budget at the beginning of May. We reintroduced that budget and we are working now to get that budget passed. In that budget, there are a number of initiatives that are investments in this province that are designed to build the province up.

We also tackled our fiscal situation. We have laid out a path to balance. We understand that there are constraints in terms of collective bargaining that need to be in place. We have also tackled the issue of revenue. I'm taking flak from the Leader of the Opposition because we recognize we have to have revenue in order to invest in transportation and transit.

Our budget is a well-thought-out and thorough plan. It is what is needed right now. The leader of the third party is looking for ways to justify to whatever her constituency is that she's not going to support that budget, but we are going to continue to—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Perhaps the Premier isn't understanding my question. It's a pretty basic one. It's about the Auditor General's review of the state of finances of the province. I'm shocked, frankly, that she hasn't responded to that question.

All of us, everyone in this House, believe that Ontario's fiscal stability must be secured. But today, credit rating agencies are breathing down our necks threatening our province with a downgrade that puts public services at risk. We cannot allow that to happen. We need the trusted Auditor General to have her say.

Will the Premier allow the Auditor General to review the Liberals' fiscal plan or will she stand in the way?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, it is the Auditor General's job to look at the finances of the province. Every year, in her report, she looks at the finances of the province.

What the leader of the third party is looking for is an excuse not to support a budget to invest in the province. With all due respect, she should be ashamed of herself for not supporting the issues that we tackle in this budget.

The Auditor General will do her work. She will look at the finances of the province, as she does every year, and we will receive those recommendations in her annual report.

In the meantime, I want to know whether the leader of the third party supports increases for personal support workers and child care workers and developmental services for adults with disabilities. Does she support those things?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Be seated, please. Order.

Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, perhaps the Premier is simply unaware of the process that her own government put in place a number of years ago. It's about a pre-election review of the state of the finances of this province. Of course, with an election in the form that we had this time, that wasn't able to happen this time around, and that still needs to happen.

Now, more than ever, in fact, families are counting on us to protect public services. With so many questions swirling around and with such high stakes for the families of this province, we need to get the full picture of Ontario's fiscal position.

The Liberals thought a review by the Auditor General was a good idea in 2004. They thought it was a good idea in 2007 and even in 2011. Why doesn't the Premier think it's a good idea now?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We had an election in this province because the NDP had an opportunity to support this budget and they chose not to do that. We are back reintroducing this budget.

I welcome the scrutiny of the Auditor General. As she does every year, she will look across government and she will make recommendations based on our financial situation.

The fact is that we ran on a platform. It is our responsibility to make sure that we implement that plan. That plan is contained in our budget, which we reintroduced to this Legislature immediately after the election. In that budget is a plan to build this province up, to help the families of this province, the very families that the leader of the third party is talking about. Those are the families we are most concerned about, those vulnerable families. The initiatives in our budget—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock.

Be seated, please. Thank you.
New question.

PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION

Mr. Michael Harris: Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

Premier, we've all heard you say several times that there's no new money for wage increases, but we now know that while you were making those comments you were in fact doing the exact opposite. Without any public scrutiny, you rubber-stamped a more than 8% wage hike for Metrolinx workers in the waning days of the last election campaign. Once again, you put your own political interests ahead of the financial management of our province—yes, you did.

Premier, wouldn't you agree that saying there's no new money for raises and then doling out a more than 8% increase to Metrolinx workers is blatant hypocrisy?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member will withdraw.

Mr. Michael Harris: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If it's used again in the supplementary, we'll pass.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Haldimand–Norfolk will withdraw.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No; stand, please.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the President of the Treasury Board is going to want to comment on this, but I want to be very clear that there is no new money for wage increases and that in the collective agreements that are bargained, including for Metrolinx, any increases would have to come from within the envelope; and that is exactly what has happened. My contention and my statement is very, very clear, and it stands that there is no new money for wages and salaries in the collective bargaining process. That was the situation before the election, when we introduced the budget, it's the situation now, and it was the situation when the Metrolinx collective agreement was finalized.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: Well, 8.45% is more than zero.

Premier, now that the government has given in to the ATU on the Metrolinx deal, other locals are looking for the same treatment. In fact, the ATU local for Guelph transit workers rejected an offer that included a 6.8% wage increase just last night. One of the primary reasons was, of course, wages—money—and it's not hard to see why when their colleagues are getting more.

Municipalities cannot take on excessive debt like the province, yet they will now be facing more financial pressure because of demands for larger wage hikes.

Premier, will you admit your short-sighted, politically motivated decision to dole out a more than 8% wage

increase to the ATU has now put already cash-strapped municipalities in a more difficult negotiating position?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Well, Speaker, we have been very clear that any wage increases must be absorbed within existing funding, and that's exactly what has happened at Metrolinx. I refer you to the budget. I don't know if you've had a chance to read it yet, but it's on page 153. I'll quote from it: "Any modest wage increases that are negotiated must be absorbed by employers within available funding and within Ontario's existing fiscal plan through efficiency and productivity gains or other trade-offs so that service levels continue to meet public needs." That's exactly what has happened at Metrolinx.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Wayne Gates: Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

It has now been established that your budget calls for a 9% cut—in real terms—in program spending over the next three years. Even economists closely associated with this government, such as Don Drummond, are saying that program cuts of this magnitude could result in a 100,000 job loss. How can this government possibly call a budget that could result in the loss of 100,000 jobs a "progressive" budget?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: It's appropriate for us to do the review, ensure that we are safeguarding the interests of the public by providing quality service, while at the same time taking fiscal prudence, ensuring that we control our spending, as we must so that we can balance the budget by 2017-18. We're looking at a suite of opportunities by which to continue to invest in those initiatives so that we can become more competitive in the future. But, Mr. Speaker, we must look at our spending and ensure that we control it so that we can balance the books by 2017-18, and that's what we'll do. Mr. Drummond has made recommendations and we're implementing over 80% of them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Wayne Gates: A 9% cut in real program spending, but still this government won't come clean with the public and tell them where those job cuts are going to fall.

Will this government finally admit that their so-called progressive budget is really an austerity budget? And will it tell us what front-line workers and services are going to be cut over the next three years?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, we made it clear in the budget that we are going to control our program spending. We've done so at 1.4% year over year. We actually did cut spending year over year, last year, while not sacrificing our service and maintaining those jobs that are so important to provide those services. We made it clear that we'll control that program spending in the years to come.

My question, though, back to you, is: You've just stated in your platform that you're going to cut it by \$600 million more. How would you expect to do that? What were you going to cut and who were you going to fire? Because we will not, on this side of the House, sacrifice the public interest.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Minister, our government has demonstrated their commitment to helping young people find meaningful employment through our youth jobs strategy. I know that the constituents in my riding of Burlington are keen to hear how this government will continue to tackle the challenges we face collectively on youth unemployment.

I'm particularly proud of the work that we've done on the youth jobs strategy, developed after a series of consultations that brought together local business leaders, employers, not-for-profits, educators, labour and, of course, youth themselves.

Minister, I know we've had some recent announcements on the success of these programs, and I'm keen to hear about what we've accomplished.

Speaker, through you to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure: Could the minister please update the House on what we will continue to do to tackle youth unemployment in Ontario?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I want to thank the member for that great question. We're committed to making the investments we need to make, to continue to invest in our people, to continue to invest in infrastructure, and building a strong climate for investment so that those young people can find jobs today and find jobs in the future. We're also committed to ensuring that those young people get the education, training and experience they need to be able to excel and succeed.

As the member knows, we've committed to the youth jobs strategy in this budget. This \$295-million strategy is creating 30,000 jobs for young people through four streams: the Ontario Youth Entrepreneurship Fund, which will support young entrepreneurs; the Ontario Youth Innovation Fund, which will support skills in industrial research, development and commercialization and build on our emerging innovation acceleration hubs; the youth skills connection program; and the centrepiece, the youth employment fund, which is helping young people get real job experience.

Together, these programs have helped 20,000 young people.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: It's great to hear that our government is committed to youth jobs.

As the member from Burlington, I'm often meeting young people searching for ways to enter Ontario's workforce and gain the necessary skills that will help them succeed. I'm very happy to hear that our strategy

does just that. However, many of the youth in my riding have said they face the challenge of needing real work experience to apply for good-paying jobs in their field but have no way of obtaining that experience or training.

With youth unemployment at 15.4% in our province, we must ensure that our young people have access to these opportunities. Can the minister update the House on how the government will continue to ensure that our young people have access to the training they need to succeed in Ontario's growing economy while, at the same time, gaining real work experience?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Speaker, I'm going to refer this to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, and Research and Innovation.

Hon. Reza Moridi: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member from Burlington for that question. Also, I want to congratulate her on her election.

Providing access to employment and training opportunities for our young people is a top priority for this government. As the minister just mentioned, we were very happy to announce that through our youth jobs strategy, 20,000 employment opportunities have already been created. The majority of those numbers came from the youth employment fund, which is a \$195-million investment to create 25,000 jobs for our youth.

We are very pleased with the results of this program so far. Of the 4,800 youth who have completed their placements, 95% of them were retained by their employers or found jobs elsewhere. This is fantastic news, Mr. Speaker. Helping young people develop their talents and skills—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

JOB CREATION

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. According to Stats Canada, 33,900 jobs were lost in June, the same month the minimum wage jumped. In fact, report after report links your policies—minimum wage hikes, high apprenticeship ratios and rising energy rates—to the 600,000 men and women currently out of work in Ontario.

Looking forward, your pledge to slap a new payroll tax on both the hard-working people of Ontario and their employers threatens to be yet another roadblock to hiring in Ontario.

Minister, please explain how you envision this payroll tax allowing small or big business to hire more workers in Ontario.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I may refer the supplementary here, but I'm pleased to take the first question, at least.

This government has done a lot for our business community to make us more competitive. I think about the corporate tax cuts that we brought in. They're giving us one of the most effective—lowest effective corporate tax rates in North America. I think about the HST, which made Ontario a much more competitive business en-

vironment. I think about our recent changes to the accelerated capital cost allowance, that encourages businesses to invest in capital and maintenance of machinery. I think about our regional economic development funds, over 90% of which have gone to the manufacturing sector.

There's a reason why we're up 460,000 net new jobs since the recession. It's because we've been working in partnership with our businesses to invest in building a strong economy. We're number one for foreign direct investment. We're going to keep moving in that direction.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bill Walker: Back to the minister: Minister, what you've done a lot of is move 300,000 manufacturing jobs out of Ontario. You talk about regional economic development. I'm hopeful that you're sincere in bringing some money to Georgian College marine emergency duties before that moves out of Ontario again.

1110

Minister, my riding is facing a staggering 21% youth unemployment rate, the highest in the province and three times the national average. In light of the thousands of young people currently looking for work, I respectfully urge you to reconsider the consequences of putting yet another roadblock to hiring in Ontario.

Please explain again, Minister: How do businesses afford adding more Ontarians to the payroll at the same time you're increasing their payroll tax?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, the member talked about the youth unemployment rate. This party agrees: The fact is that the youth unemployment rate is double the unemployment rate for everyone else. But I defy you to find a jurisdiction anywhere in North America doing more for our young people than this government here in the province of Ontario today.

Our youth jobs strategy—and my colleague just mentioned it: 20,000 young people since the fall have received youth job experiences through that program. Of the 4,800 who have already completed their requirements, over 90% of them are still retained in employment. That's a program that's unique. It's a program that's working. We're also using that program to invest in youth who want to be entrepreneurs. We're using it to build our innovation hub. We're using it to create partnerships for training.

Mr. Speaker, nobody in North America is doing more for our young people than this government. We're going to keep doing it—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

FIRE IN TECUMSEH

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My question this morning is to the Premier. It's about a major fire that destroyed parts of a food processing plant in Tecumseh last Friday. But first, Speaker, allow me to thank the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for touching base and keeping me in the loop last Friday morning, as well as the Minister of Community Safety.

Good morning, Premier. You have said that you wouldn't forget about those parts of the province that are represented by members of the opposition. After a major fire at the St. Albert cheese factory in Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, the province made a million-dollar grant available. I know it's early days yet, but all things considered, will the Bonduelle plant in Tecumseh receive equal consideration as the St. Albert cheese factory?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs will want to comment, but I want to just say, first of all, that I have spoken with the member and I reached out to the mayor of Tecumseh. I know that both the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs have had conversations with folks in Tecumseh.

Mr. Speaker, we will do everything in our power. I understand that the business is getting back on its feet and there has been good progress there already. Obviously, we will stay in close touch and we will do everything in our power to make sure that this business can thrive.

Agri-food is a part of our economy that is extremely important. The money in our Jobs and Prosperity Fund—part of that is carved out specifically for food processing. I know that we will stay in touch with this business and make sure that we do everything in our power to make sure it thrives.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Premier, as you know, this fire caused an estimated \$30 million to \$40 million in damage, and it couldn't have come at a worse time, with peak production just a couple of weeks away. Some 700 people are normally employed during the corn harvest; 145 farmers grow crops for this plant. Actually, 95% of Canada's Green Giant product comes from this facility. Whatever Ontario can do to sustain and grow this business would guarantee a brighter future for us all.

Will the Premier or the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs commit to a speedy decision on what grants may be available and to visiting this plant and seeing first-hand the destruction this fire has caused?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I learned of the fire at Bonduelle at about 7 a.m. on Friday morning. I immediately called the mayor of Tecumseh, Mr. McNamara. I had an extensive conversation with His Worship. I then touched base with my colleague the member from Windsor–Tecumseh, and later that morning I talked to the president in a conference call with the principals of Bonduelle.

Of course, at this time all of our thoughts in this chamber are with the employees, the growers and the community during this very difficult time. I want to take this opportunity to thank the emergency responders who did such an incredible job with the mutual aid program for fire services within that community.

The real challenge, from a safety perspective—there were ammonia tanks within the warehouse. We remember the Mississauga train derailment, and the safety—

from my colleague the Minister of Community and Social Services to respond to this particular—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question?

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Mr. Han Dong: My question is to the Minister of Labour. While talking to constituents in Trinity–Spadina, I still hear stories about foreign workers who come to Ontario with the promise of a job, only to find crippling recruitment fees and bills on the other side. Our young people seeking real-world experience try to beef up their resumé and establish a career, but are not being protected by Ontario's strict rules on health and safety. That's just not right.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Is the government doing anything on this?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member from Trinity–Spadina for his question. He's absolutely right, and I want to thank him for being such a strong advocate for his constituents and bringing this forward.

We're committed to standing up for Ontario's workers because safe and fair workplaces are the foundation of a strong, competitive and growing economy.

Last week, we introduced legislation that, if passed, would address the exact concerns the member from Trinity–Spadina has raised and more. It will make it illegal for employees to charge temporary foreign workers recruitment fees or to take away personal documents. His constituents in Trinity–Spadina will now have access to information sheets on employment rights and health and safety rights, and those will be handed out in 23 languages.

This bill will also bring co-op students, trainees and other unpaid learners under the Occupational Health and Safety Act so that they can get valuable work experience but be protected at the same time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Han Dong: I thank the minister for his answer. I'm sure my constituents in Trinity–Spadina will be pleased to know that the government hears their concerns and is taking steps to address them.

I also hear from workers who have been taken advantage of by their employers and, in some instances, left with no pay, or workers who are assigned to the most dangerous jobs simply because they were recruited through a temporary help agency.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: When is the Ministry of Labour proposing to ensure that hard-working individuals are paid for the work they do?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thanks again to the member from Trinity–Spadina.

Making sure workers get paid for the work they do and giving businesses that play by the rules a competitive advantage is what this proposed legislation is all about. The bill, if passed, would remove the current \$10,000 cap on the recovery of unpaid wages from an order to pay from the Ministry of Labour, but it would also increase

the time limit from six months or a year; now it will be two years, if the bill passes. More workers will get the money they're owed.

Our government was the first in Canada to introduce legislation specifically addressing temporary help agencies in 2009, so this bill, if passed, would take the next step and would increase protections for other workers. It would extend this joint liability for both unpaid wages and workplace injuries. We believe that these proposed changes will lead to real and meaningful action for Ontario workers.

VEHICLE PERMITS

Mrs. Julia Munro: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. It now takes six to nine business days to expedite an oversized-vehicle permit for travel on Ontario highways. This is a very long time to wait for a permit, and this problem is exacerbated when a vehicle is travelling to another jurisdiction where a similar permit is required. Timing is of the essence. All of these permits are time-sensitive.

Can the minister please explain why the permits, which used to take 48 hours to acquire, now take almost two weeks?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member opposite for that question. Actually, I don't mind pointing out to her and also to the House that one of my colleagues, the Minister of Natural Resources, has actually raised this issue with me as well. I will be happy to take a look and to delve a little bit deeper into the issue, and I'd be happy to get back to the member opposite.

I do appreciate the question and I look forward to working with you on this.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Julia Munro: Minister, the timing of these permits is crucial for the survival of businesses that must transport their goods across the province, particularly for those vehicles that are going into other jurisdictions, because they have to be able to purchase their permits according to how long their vehicle is going to be in that jurisdiction. How does this fit in with your Open for Business initiative? Clearly, this is just another example of red tape and government making it harder for businesses to compete and survive. I've heard that within the last year the waiting time for permits has grown worse and worse. When can businesses count on a more efficient expedited process for their oversized-vehicle permits?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I do thank the member opposite for that question, for the supplementary. As I mentioned in responding to the original question, I would be happy to talk to her and to work with members on all sides of the House and with individuals who are affected by this particular circumstance to try to come to a resolution. I do understand why it's an important issue, and I certainly do acknowledge and appreciate that the member opposite shares our passion for making sure that we do find ways to reduce burdens that may exist, to help the

economy continue to flourish. That's why it is so important, in the budget that was introduced originally on May 1 and then again just a few days ago, that the Minister of Finance spent a fair degree of time talking about the importance of opening up and reducing the burdens that we discussed.

As I said in my original answer, I would be happy to work with the member opposite in trying to find a resolution on this.

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the minister responsible for the Pan/Parapan games. Speaker, last week I asked the Minister of Infrastructure about the costly delay to completion of the Hamilton stadium. His flip reply was to ignore the serious problem of venue construction delays and to wax on about future venue use. The people of this province aren't looking for typical responses from this government; they're looking for answers. Can this minister move past the Liberal partisan playbook and admit that major projects are behind schedule and that this is likely going to result in extra costs for Ontarians long after these games are done?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I want to thank the member opposite for the question. The Pan Am Games and the Parapan Am Games are the largest multi-sport events that have ever taken place in the history of this country. We have an incredible opportunity as the host to have our 60 municipalities come together and have the federal government and provincial government work together to build new venues so we can support our athletes here in the province of Ontario.

We have 31 venues that are being built or retrofitted and 12 training facilities here in the province of Ontario. Six of those venues have suffered some type of delay. I know that the member opposite laughed at the reason I gave last week in regard to the weather, but we went through a very cold winter; we had an ice storm.

There were some delays, but I can assure you that all of our venues will be well-positioned for the games here in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: Actually, we ran a steel plant 365 days a year there, in case you didn't know.

Speaker, Ontarians want to know that promises made on Pan/Parapan venue completion dates and costs matter. It's not just the Hamilton stadium; it's several venues. We learned from the Pan/Parapan organizers' quarterly report last week where completion deadlines have been or will be missed. TO2015 is also missing deadlines on venues within their scope.

Again, on behalf of the athletes and the taxpayers, will this government finally come clean in this House about: (1) the missed deadlines; (2) what plan B is to complete the venues; and (3) any cost overruns associated with their failure on this file?

Hon. Michael Coteau: Again, I'd like to thank the member for the question. I know he's a big supporter of

sports and athleticism here in the province of Ontario. He finished his question by saying, "Think of the athletes," and that's exactly what we're doing here on this side of the Legislature. Our athletes don't have to travel to California if they want to practise their specific sports. They can stay right here in Ontario. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, but people from right across this country can come into Ontario—and I think we need to keep things in perspective. Our venues will be finished almost a year before the games. The games are next year, and these venues are positioned to be finished all in the fall, the six venues. We have rebuilt our infrastructure for sport and athleticism here in the province of Ontario. Now is the time for all of us to get together and to celebrate our athletes here in the province.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Chris Ballard: My question is to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. Speaker, climate change is considered one of the defining issues of our time and requires continuous effort to address, by governments, industry, communities and individuals. It's important that our government take the necessary steps to ensure Ontario properly adapts to and mitigates the effects of climate change. A failure to do so could be detrimental to Ontarians today and more so to future generations. It's for these reasons that I was very pleased to hear the Premier and minister's announcement of a few weeks ago about the Ending Coal for Cleaner Air Act. I believe this to be a positive step in the right direction.

Speaker, through you, could the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change please update the House on our government's progress towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and climate change?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to congratulate my friend from Newmarket–Aurora on his election, and also his concern and understanding of particularly the relationship between climate change and municipal infrastructure, and his advocacy for it.

Mr. Speaker, in 2005, when I chaired the national round table, our emissions in Canada were 737 megatonnes. Today, they are 702. The only thing that's happened in Canada in that period of time was the closure of our coal plants. As a matter of fact, there is almost nothing that has been done by any other provincial government or our national government that comes close. The challenge is to have Canada's GHG emissions coming down. Right now, it seems to be almost entirely on the weight of provinces like Quebec and Ontario.

Finally, the costs to infrastructure and to the insurance industry are amazing. In nine of the past 11 years, for the first time, insurance claims on property damage related to climate change and flooding have exceeded premiums. This is becoming an economic problem and an infrastructure problem—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Chris Ballard: Again my question is for the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister, I'm pleased to be part of a government that is taking the issue of climate change so seriously. These are positive steps forward. However, it is important that I address the concerns raised by many of my constituents in Newmarket and Aurora. A common theme among their concerns relates to the protection of our natural water resources. They fear that the new weather norms, which can already be attributed to climate change, such as increased storm water runoff and discharge, are having a negative effect on nearby Lake Simcoe and bodies of water within our own riding. The harmful chemicals that increased storm water runoff can bring into these bodies of water can negatively affect their sustainability.

Speaker, through you, could the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change please share with the House what efforts are in place to protect our water from the changing conditions of our climate?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Part of our challenge with water and sewer systems is—there are a number of us over here who are mayors and former councillors who will tell you that we used to talk about things being 1-in-500-year events, and you would not allow people to build houses in areas where that happened and you would try to build your sewers to 1-in-100-year events or 1-in-500-year events.

The problem now, Mr. Speaker, is that those 1-in-500-year events in the 1990s, in this decade are 1-in-10-year events. But this government has been very vigilant with our municipal partners and not too concerned about the political stripes of the people representing that, to an earlier comment. As a matter of fact, the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority was given \$1.5 million to develop innovative technology approaches to managing stormwater, and the regional municipality of York, as I know you've advocated for and were part of, was given almost \$150,000 for green sewage infrastructure—

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ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Minister of Education.

Minister, you've made grand statements about your efforts to combat bullying in our schools. The laws and regulations enacted by your government require principals to notify parents if their child has been harmed due to bullying, and to outline the steps being taken and the supports being provided for the pupil in response to bullying.

These are necessary legislative requirements, but unfortunately, there's a family in my riding who, due to a lack of action from school administrators in response to bullying, have had to pull their child out of school.

Minister, laws and regulations are only as good as the people responsible for enforcing them. What process does your ministry follow to ensure school boards comply with anti-bullying legislation, how do you keep school

administrators accountable, and why has this process failed in my riding?

Hon. Liz Sandals: There has been, as you have noted, a series of pieces of legislation to put in place both legislation and policy around managing bullying in our schools. We have come a long way. Not every incident turns out to be managed 100% perfectly.

I think one of the big strides that we are making is making sure, when we do training, that we ensure teachers have the appropriate training. Certainly, when we put the new laws in place, there was a lot of training for the teachers at that time. But with the changes that we're making to our initial teacher education program at the faculty of education, we will now ensure that every new teacher to be licensed in Ontario will have training on safe schools and anti-bullying protocols, as part of their training to be licensed as a teacher in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question was about accountability and how the processes are monitored, not training, so maybe in my supplemental, I'll get the answer to my first question.

Minister, bullying is one of the most harmful things a child can experience while at school. Bullying imposes significant health and social consequences on our community and can adversely affect the development of our students. Fortunately, we have moved past the notion that bullying is a natural part of school and just something that someone has to deal with.

I'm pleased that every party in this House has agreed that legislation is a tool that must be used to fight against bullying. But, unfortunately, your government has one of the worst track records for oversight and accountability. This leads to non-compliance, which is undermining anti-bullying legislation.

Minister, can you explain to the family in my riding why they had to pull their child from the school despite legislation designed to keep their child safe?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased that you've noted the dramatic impact that bullying can have on a child, because when you look at all the research, it absolutely indicates that a child who has been bullied—that it can have a dramatic impact, both on their current school experience and their future life.

In fact, the same is true of the child who does the bullying, a chronic bully. You often see that they also have a negative outlook, when you look down the road.

Absolutely, when a parent is concerned, they need to be contacting their local trustee, because it is in fact the local trustees who are accountable for ensuring that this legislation is put into place.

I must say that it is extremely strange to be getting a lecture from this party, which failed to vote in favour of the last piece of bullying legislation, which was Bill 13. You've—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

ENERGY CONTRACTS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Algoma—Manitoulin.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning to you. My question is to the Premier.

For seven years, the isolated Lac La Croix reserve has pinned its hopes on a promising hydroelectric program, partly bankrolled by a Toronto philanthropist, that could generate clean power and economic opportunity.

Now it appears that this government has quietly snuffed out a promising hydroelectric project that could generate clean power and economic opportunity for the isolated reserve, perched along the Minnesota border. Can the Premier explain why it is destroying years of hard work on what was the community's best chance to break the cycle of poverty and unemployment?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: In total, more than 35 First Nation and Métis communities are involved in wind, solar and hydroelectric projects across the province. They are all required to abide by their contracts and by the rules. That is 240 projects, representing over 1,000 megawatts of clean energy.

I've met with the Lac La Croix First Nation and Gemini Power in the past, and have offered another technical meeting with them to discuss this project. They have an existing FIT contract with the OPA. Like all FIT contracts, they have a fixed price, and proponents are required by contract to pay the costs of connecting their project to the provincial grid.

The contracts are in place to protect ratepayers and create clear expectations for developers. It would be completely unfair to all other contract owners if the government were to increase the price under the existing contract for only one project to cover the costs of transmission.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Again to the Premier: Premier, the major roadblock is a botched transmission line. Without a proper connection, the proposed run-of-river dam is a non-starter. Hydro One, the government's own utility, which is responsible for transmission, claims it would cost roughly \$16 million to build the transmission line, but this cost is contested by many hydro experts familiar with this project. Why is this government blocking this badly needed project that could provide jobs and hope to this isolated community?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I can only repeat that the contract is very specific. It's a contract, like all the other contracts, that requires the proponent to pay the costs of transmission. They have to assure themselves that it's available before they submit to win a contract for a fixed price, with the responsibility to produce the transmission.

We have been exceedingly innovative in terms of our incentives for First Nations people to participate in our energy sector. It is unprecedented, the number of contracts we have awarded to First Nations. We're extremely proud of that. I certainly await a response from this particular proponent to come in and review the file once

again. I provided to them that opportunity in the letter early in May.

CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Ms. Harinder Malhi: My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. Physical activity is linked to minimizing cardiovascular disease risk factors and enhancing positive health outcomes, and has a positive impact on academic performance. Childhood obesity is on the rise, and less than 10% of Ontario children and youth achieve 60 minutes of daily physical activity six days a week. The economic costs associated with physical inactivity in Ontario are estimated at \$3.4 billion.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Can he please update us on which ways our government is working towards decreasing childhood obesity and increasing the amount of physical activity Ontario children and youth are receiving?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'd like to thank the member for the question. Before I answer, I'd just like to recognize that the North American Indigenous Games are taking place this week in Saskatchewan, and I want to wish all of our athletes from Ontario all the best.

Our government is committed to promoting and protecting the health of Ontario's youth people. Our after-school program provides the opportunity for children and youth to participate in fun, safe and supervised activities that focus on: physical activity, recreation and sport to encourage active lifestyles; healthy eating and nutrition education to help combat child obesity; and personal health and wellness education to promote self-esteem.

The after-school program is a critical component of Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy and our youth action plan. As a former school board trustee, I am so proud to support this program and to take on this new role in this ministry.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Northumberland—Quinte West on a point of order.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: A point of order, Speaker: I hope you'll indulge me to introduce my wife, Diane, and Maria and five grandkids. They experienced gridlock in the GTA this morning, but they're here, along with my grandkids Lucas, Madeline, Monica, Maddox and Morgan, right in the west gallery.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's not a point of order, but we welcome our guests.

There are no deferred votes.

This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1139 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Yvan Baker: I have the honour of welcoming a number of guests to the Legislature today. We have Steve

Andrusiak, president of the Ukrainian Canadian Conference for Ontario. We have Jim Jakuta, who is the former president of the Ukrainian Canadian Conference for Alberta. We have Liudmyla Davydovych, who is the consul for the Consulate General of Ukraine in Toronto; Myroslava Oleksiuk, who is my mother—you've all met her at least once today; Victor Hetmaneczuk, from the Canada Ukraine Foundation; Ihor Tomkiw, who is a leader in our community in many respects, and George Foty, an election observer in Ukraine.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pryvit.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CONFLICT IN MIDDLE EAST

Mrs. Gila Martow: I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the current situation in Israel and the Palestinian territories. We in Canada are so fortunate to live in a country and province that are blessed with peace and stability. I can only hope that the aggression and violence that have currently taken hold in Israel will end as quickly as they started, and that a lasting, peaceful solution will bring stability and tolerance to a region that is desperately in need of it.

I pray for the well-being of my family and friends who are currently in Israel, and extend my thoughts and prayers to all of my constituents living in Thornhill, as well as those across the province, who have family members and friends who have been affected by the cowardly, violent, reckless and indiscriminate actions of Hamas, a known terrorist group, that have cost the lives of so many innocent civilians in the region. I hope that the scourge of terrorism will be strongly rejected by all peace-loving people around the world.

I woke up to disappointing news this morning that a mosque in my riding was defaced overnight with messages of hatred and intolerance. It is my hope that those messages are removed quickly and that the perpetrators are caught and brought to justice. I believe that we in Ontario and Canada should continue to serve as exemplary role models to the world of how diverse communities can live together with values of respect and tolerance.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I want to bring to people's attention the recent report from the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, Looking for Leadership, his annual report on greenhouse gas emissions action by this government.

He notes that Ontario has no plan to meet our 2020 targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. That means that we will continue to be part of this global problem. He also reports that Ontario is not ready for the mess that it is helping to create.

People and their homes and families are in harm's way because the Liberals have consistently refused to act on warnings that power lines and sewer lines are vulnerable to the extreme weather that comes from global warming. Two years ago, New Brunswick's Consumer Advocate for Insurance warned that damage from climate-related extreme weather events had taken over from fire as the top source of insurance claims.

The Liberal government has received many warnings about the need to act. As the Environmental Commissioner reports, they have done little. The next time an extreme weather event fills people's basements with sewage, traps trains on flooded rail lines or leaves people in the dark with no power, they need to remember the Liberals' failure to protect them.

CONFLICT IN UKRAINE

Mr. Yvan Baker: This morning, this House gave unanimous consent to hold a moment of silence to commemorate the loss of 298 passengers on Malaysia Airlines flight MH17. This is a tragedy of unspeakable proportions. The families of those lost remain in all our thoughts during this devastating time.

The unfortunate reality is that this is one more act of unspeakable violence in a string of civilian casualties since the crisis in Ukraine began. The dead include brave Ukrainians who stood in Independence Square to demand a better life and died for that cause at the hands of the Yanukovych regime. It includes those whose blood has been spilled by rebels that have, according to US government officials, likely been funded, supplied and trained by the Putin regime.

Now the violence in Ukraine has made casualties of 298 citizens from countries around the world who were needlessly shot down on that flight. The killing of civilians during a conflict, whether deliberate or not, is inexcusable. As leaders and as MPPs, I believe we have a responsibility to speak up in the face of injustice and when human rights are violated, and now is one of those times.

The violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity is an affront to all those who value democracy, freedom and human rights. I would urge our federal government and the international community to implement stringent sanctions against the Putin regime and provide support to the Ukrainian government as it seeks to preserve Ukraine's independence, democracy and freedom from violence.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that these are principles that we all in this House share. That is why I stand today in solidarity with all those who seek a peaceful and democratic plan for Ukrainians and all people seeking to protect their freedom.

CONFLICT IN MIDDLE EAST

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Since mid-June, more than 1,700 missiles and mortars have been fired at Israeli citizens. Sadly, virtually all of Israel is now on the front

lines as more than five million Israelis have been forced to take shelter from Hamas missile fire. Hamas is an extreme Islamist terrorist group, banned in Canada and various other countries throughout the world, that deliberately targets Israeli civilians while using innocent Palestinians as human shields.

Speaker, you will know that Prime Minister Harper has clearly stated that Canada is unequivocally behind Israel: "Failure by the international community to condemn these reprehensible actions would encourage these terrorists to continue their appalling actions. Canada calls on its allies and partners to recognize that these terrorist acts are unacceptable...."

On behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, I applaud Prime Minister Harper for calling on the world to adopt the same position, and to express solidarity with Israel as the best means to end this conflict.

Speaker, no one should have to live in constant fear for the safety of their own children. It is time for the Palestinian government to disarm Hamas and all other Palestinian terrorist groups in operation, including the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. I and members of the PC caucus join in solidarity with millions calling for an immediate end to the daily terror and a return to quiet and stability.

FIRE IN TECUMSEH

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Earlier today in question period, I talked about the horrendous fire that devastated the community of Tecumseh last Friday. A fire broke out in the warehouse of a Bonduelle plant. I believe four or five of the warehouses went up—a great deal of tonnage of product that was already packaged, peas and beans.

Earlier today, we talked about the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs keeping me in the loop—I appreciated that—and the Minister of Community Safety as well. Nobody wanted to play politics with this. I know they were in touch with the mayor, Gary McNamara, and town council.

I just want to pay tribute, if I could, sir, to all of the first responders who helped out, because basically we had support from every fire department in Windsor and Essex county. Leamington, Amherstburg, LaSalle, Essex, Kingsville: They were all out there and lending a hand; the city of Windsor as well. The first responders were helped by the Red Cross and different people. Everybody pulled together and it was a great tribute. Had these ammonia tanks gone up, Speaker, it would have been a horrendous tragedy. As it is, we hope that the plant will rebuild and will hire more people than ever before.

Thank you to all of the people that responded and responded in such a great way to save that community.

ANDREI ANGHEL

Mr. Joe Dickson: It is with heavy heart that I rise in the House today to commemorate the sole Canadian and an Ajax resident of mine who perished in the crash of

Malaysia Airlines flight MH17. Andrei Anghel was a 24-year-old medical student who grew up in my hometown and constituency where I have lived all my life.

Earlier today, all members stood in a minute's silence for Andrei, as graciously put forward by my colleague Yvan Baker of Etobicoke Centre.

Andrei's mother, Anca, and father, Sorin, live near Lake Ontario, just south off Audley Road in Ajax on Hoile Drive. This is only minutes from my home.

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Andrei graduated from the University of Waterloo with an honours degree in biomedical sciences after finishing high school at Ajax High. He was attending medical school in Romania, which was indicative of his ambition and his drive to help others.

His father, Sorin, describes Andrei as an avid artist and explorer. His goal in life was to find a cure for cancer.

It is unfathomable to understand the sorrow and pain currently experienced by those affected, and we all share the Legislature's condolences with the Anghel family. My heart and soul go out to Sorin, Anca and Alexandra, from all Ajax residents, and all others around the world who lost their loved ones in this most senseless tragedy.

PEOPLE FIRST OF LANARK COUNTY

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Today, People First of Lanark County celebrates its eighth anniversary. People First of Lanark County was formed on July 21, 2006, by Kory Earle, the founder and former leader of the local chapter and now an honorary member.

A leader in self-advocacy, People First has enjoyed many successful campaigns. Highlights include the introduction of the Protecting Vulnerable People Against Picketing Act, inclusive education programs, increased community acceptance, community partnerships with the Community Living Association of Lanark County and the Mills Community Support Corporation, and an anti-bullying campaign.

Beyond advocacy, People First of Lanark County has made it a point of pride to give back to the community through their annual Bunny Run and community Christmas dinner.

Today, I would like to congratulate People First of Lanark County for their tireless efforts and good work bringing people together over the last eight years.

FOOTBALL

Mr. John Fraser: I'm pleased to stand today and announce that CFL football has returned to Ottawa. Last Friday, the Ottawa RedBlacks hosted the Toronto Argonauts in their home opener. A sellout crowd of 24,000-plus enjoyed Ottawa's first CFL game since 2005 at the brand new TD Place stadium. Congratulations to the Ottawa Sports and Entertainment Group, its partners and tradespeople for transforming Lansdowne Park into a beautiful, people-friendly stadium ready for game time. It

gives Ottawans a gathering place to celebrate sport and our community.

Last Friday was a real celebration with old rivalries revived between the north side and the south side stands. I sat on the south side for Friday night's game despite having been a long-time north side season ticket holder. I have seen the light and understand more clearly the sentiment expressed by the south siders, and have now converted to the south side.

Speaking of old rivalries, Friday saw a come-from-behind victory on a last-minute field goal by Brett Maher—

Hon. Jeff Leal: Remember Russ Jackson?

Mr. John Fraser: —he was there—led by a spirited defence. The final score was 18-17, and it gave the RedBlacks their first win of the season. Equally as important, it silenced those Argos fans in the crowd. Congratulations to Coach Campbell and his team.

Next up is taming the Tiger-Cats this Saturday night—to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Speaker, it's great to have the CFL back in Ottawa and thanks to all those who made it happen.

NEWMARKET CAR CLUB

Mr. Chris Ballard: Mr. Speaker, thanks for the opportunity to bring good news from my constituency of Newmarket, specifically about the 40th anniversary of the Newmarket Car Club. It's a car club with a twist: While members enjoy classic and high-performance vehicles, the club is also a service organization raising funds for the Food Pantry and sponsoring minor hockey.

The group also organizes a number of popular community events, like Life is a Drag, the annual Graffiti Night, cruises, the Main Street Car Show and the very impressive Rods by the River Car and Truck Extravaganza.

The Newmarket Car Club is, I'm told, the largest car club in York region.

Like so many excellent groups found in towns and cities across our great province, the Newmarket Car Club began when a number of residents came together to enjoy a common interest. Like so many others, it grew into something bigger, as members decided to give back to the community. The group has become a part of the fabric of Newmarket, joining with other local service groups to foster a strong sense of community, so important in helping our town be a great place to live.

If you find yourself hankering for a visual feast of classic and high-performance cars, the smell of hot engines, the gleam of highly polished chrome and the feel of thundering raw power, cruise to Newmarket on August 9 for the annual Rods by the River event.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

1474486 ONTARIO LIMITED ACT, 2014

Ms. Sattler moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr2, An Act to revive 1474486 Ontario Limited.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

PETITIONS

MARKDALE HOSPITAL

Mr. Bill Walker: To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Grey Bruce Health Services' Markdale hospital is the only health care facility between Owen Sound and Orangeville on the Highway 10 corridor;

"Whereas the community of Markdale rallied to raise \$13 million on the promise they would get a new state-of-the-art hospital in Markdale;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care announce as soon as possible its intended construction date for the new Markdale hospital and ensure that the care needs of the patients and families of our community are met in a timely manner."

I support it, will affix my signature and send it with page Brendan.

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Ms. Peggy Sattler: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas youth mental health in the province of Ontario is rising at an alarming rate. According to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 70% of mental health problems and illnesses have their onset during childhood or adolescence. Research shows that early identification leads to improved outcomes;

"Whereas, pursuant to the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, studies suggest 15% to 21% of children and youth, approximately 467,000 to 654,000 children and youth in Ontario, have at least one mental health disorder. The consequences can affect children and youth now and into adulthood, their families/caregivers, schools, communities, employers and the province as a whole;

"Whereas the 2010 Ontario report by the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, entitled *Navigating the Journey to Wellness: The Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan for Ontarians*, made specific recommendations that would address the growing mental health and addiction crisis among youth

in the province, but no further concrete steps have been taken;

"Whereas waiting lists for help are at a crisis level and our schools do not have the resources to deal with the growing incidents of bullying, addiction, anxiety, depression and suicide. Education and awareness is critical to remove the stigma;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to prioritize funding and resources for our schools and communities to help our youth with mental health and addiction illnesses and the resulting consequences."

I fully support this petition, affix my signature and give it to page Nardien to take to the table.

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WASTE REDUCTION

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas protecting the environment should be everyone's responsibility, including manufacturing and material producing companies; and

"Whereas it is important to require producers to be financially and environmentally responsible for recycling the goods and packaging they sell in Ontario, and to divert these wastes from landfill to recycling to drive innovation, generate new jobs, and new Ontario-made products; and

"Whereas new approaches are needed that reflect ideas and recommendations from the recycling sector that are designed to improve current recycling systems, to increase recycling and diversion rates, and better protect our environment;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That members of the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act, 2013, introduced on June 6, 2013, by the Ontario Minister of Environment."

I fully support the petition, and I will give the petition to page Matthew.

MINIMUM WAGE

Mr. Bill Walker: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's minimum wage has been frozen at \$10.25 an hour since 2010, and some workers earn even less due to current exemptions in the Employment Standards Act; and

"Whereas full-time minimum wage workers are living at nearly 20% below the poverty line as measured by the Ontario government's low-income measure (LIM); and

"Whereas minimum wage should, as a matter of principle, bring people working 35 hours per week above the poverty line; and

"Whereas an immediate increase in the minimum wage to \$14 per hour would bring workers' wages 10% above the LIM poverty line; and

"Whereas raising the minimum wage will benefit workers, local businesses and the economy by putting money in workers' pockets to spend in their local community;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately increase the minimum wage to \$14 per hour for all workers and thereafter increase it annually by no less than the cost of living."

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I ask for order, please. We tend not to heckle during petitions.

Further petitions.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have a petition gathered by people from right across Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

I agree with this petition. I will sign my name to it and present it to page David to present to the Clerk.

CREDIT UNIONS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further petitions. The member from Perth—Wellington.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Microphone.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario's economy and create jobs in three ways:

"—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

"—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

"—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries."

I agree with this and will be sending it off to the table with page Hayden.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank the member from Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, and I apologize for the microphone call because you actually did it right. So thank you. My apologies.

Further petitions?

HOUSE SITTINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Orders of the day. The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to standing order 8(e), I wish to indicate that no business is to be called during orders of the day tomorrow morning.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Now you can carry on to the next phase—so carry on.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, it's my great pleasure and privilege—I move adjournment of the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is moving adjournment of the House. Agreed? Agreed. Carried.

This House therefore stands adjourned until 10:30 a.m., Tuesday, July 22.

The House adjourned at 1326.

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Government
Publications



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**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

First Session, 41st Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 41^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 22 July 2014

Mardi 22 juillet 2014



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 22 July 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 22 juillet 2014

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.
Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'd like to introduce seven people who have joined us in the east members' gallery today from our wonderful staff at the Ministry of Labour. We've got Ben Lim, Jordan McLeod, Alissa Bortolus, Jenny Nguyen, Pamela Britto, Christopher Taylor and Janet Deline. Please welcome them to Queen's Park.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: I'd like to introduce Sandip Nagra, who is a resident from Brampton–Springdale and also my new constituency assistant.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Joining us today in the east members' gallery is Charlene Lee from Janssen Pharmaceuticals, which is located in the beautiful riding of Don Valley East. Welcome.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I'm very excited to introduce a very close friend of mine, Craig Haynes, who I've known for decades and decades, who is visiting here at Queen's Park, along with his parents, Russell and Linda Haynes, who are visiting from New Brunswick. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I'm pleased to introduce and welcome to the gallery my daughter, Linnaea Kiwala, who is here with us today. She'll be with us the next couple of days. So welcome, Linnaea.

Mr. Han Dong: I would like to introduce my guests, local entrepreneur Lin Jian and his business partners from Fujin, China: Chen Hai Bin, Hong Guo Wen, Lin Shu Ming and Zheng Zhi Xin. I wish them a fruitful visit and welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Premier. Premier, at yesterday's budget hearings, aviation sector representatives expressed serious concern with your government's proposed 148% increase to the province's aviation fuel tax over the next four years. Marc-André O'Rourke, executive director of the National Airlines Council of Canada, collectively represents over 43,000 employees. He said that this tax increase could mean the

loss of more than 2,000 jobs and 400,000 air travellers in Ontario alone.

Yesterday, the finance minister was forced to admit that job losses would result from this fuel tax increase, so he blurted out that some airports might be exempt; he just didn't know which ones.

Premier, Ontario can't afford any more job losses. Will you defer implementing this tax increase until a full economic study is done?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: First, let me just say that the modest increase on the tax rate on aviation fuel is part of a comprehensive plan, and it's a plan that we put forward in our budget when we brought in the budget at the beginning of May, it's the plan that we ran on in the provincial election, and it's the plan that we reintroduced in this budget.

And it's the plan that has led us to a situation where two rating agencies, both S&P—Standard and Poor's—and DBRS, have chosen not to downgrade Ontario. They have actually confirmed our outlook. It seems to me that if Standard and Poor's is saying, "Ontario's fiscal management is strong"—this is part of the fiscal management plan that we put forward, so we're going to stick with it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Premier, the fact that your finance minister was unprepared to tell us yesterday who would be exempt from this tax increase just demonstrates that once again you're barrelling ahead with a tax increase without considering who you're hurting.

Don McDougald, chair of the Kenora airport board, said that this fuel tax increase will be "devastating" to Kenora's small airport, and gives Americans cause to reconsider flying directly to Kenora. Kenora is just one of many airports in small communities across Ontario which will suffer from your actions.

Premier, if you won't conduct an impact study, will you at least answer the question that your finance minister couldn't answer yesterday: Which Ontario airports will be exempt from the aviation fuel tax increase?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I applaud the late-breaking concern for the north from the party across the floor, because the fact is that from the outset we have said that small and northern airports would receive special consideration because we understand that there is a concern with those airports, because we actually care deeply about what happens in the north. We care deeply about the northern economy, and that is why, from the outset, we said that that was a concern in this instance.

The fact is that this is a modest increase. The aviation fuel tax has not increased since 1992. If you look at other

jurisdictions, if you look at London Heathrow, their aviation fuel tax is 69.6 cents per litre; ours is 2.7 cents per litre. We are making a fiscally sound decision.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Mr. Speaker, we're not only concerned about small airports in the north, we're concerned about airports in central and southern Ontario also, right from London to Collingwood to Owen Sound to Barrie to Buttonville—you name it.

You said in your budget that you weren't going to increase taxes on the middle class. I guess you think that just rich people and business people fly. The fact of the matter is more middle-class, average families fly every year, and you're hitting the middle class with this tax increase. People fly to visit their children at university; kids fly home; they fly to visit a sick parent overseas; they fly to reconnect with family members—that's the vast majority of people. They fly to go on a well-deserved vacation—that's the vast majority of flying. You're hurting the middle class.

You failed to consider the impact of this tax increase on the middle class. So I ask you again, will you defer implementing the aviation fuel tax increase until a full study of its economic impact has been undertaken?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, it's very interesting that this reaction is coming from the party opposite, when it's federal taxes and fees that actually increase the costs the most.

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This modest increase that we are putting forward in our budget will have a minimal impact on travellers, and it's up to the organizations to make a decision as to how they pass that along. The fact is that the analysis that we have seen shows that there will be very little impact on airlines and on passengers.

We've also said that small and northern airports need special consideration.

We also know that the transportation and transit infrastructure that we are going to build as a result of our plan—and this is part of our plan—will actually help the airline industry. That will actually help our airports. That infrastructure is well-needed across the province.

PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Premier. Premier, your Treasury Board president claimed yesterday that Metrolinx would not cut service levels to pay for the 8.5% wage increase you doled out to 1,850 transit workers in June. Does that mean that you're planning to pass these costs on to GO riders with even higher fares?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know that the President of the Treasury Board will want to comment on this, but I just want to reinforce what I said yesterday, which is that we are well aware that in terms of collective bargaining for public sector employees, it is very necessary that we hold to the funding levels that are in place now and work to bargain within those funding levels.

That's exactly what happened with Metrolinx. The increase is over four years. The member opposite is making it sound like that increase is all in one year, but it is not; it is over four years. That increase of about 2% a year is found within the funding levels that already exist. That's what we have committed to. That's what has been delivered in this collective agreement.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Michael Harris: Premier, you should know that millions of dollars for pay hikes can't be created out of thin air. You need to cover these new costs, either by cutting services or by raising revenue, and so far you've shown that your favourite method to make up for the shortfalls is raising fares.

Premier, can you tell this House how much, in total, your 8.5% pay raise for 1,850 workers will cost?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, let me just use an example, because I think this is a broader issue. The members on the other side immediately go to cutting and slashing services. That's the framework within which they operate. That was their entire platform. That's what they—

Mr. John Yakubuski: Answer the question.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew will come to order.

Please finish.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me give you an example of how you can constrain costs and change the way service is delivered at the same time. If you look at the health care system in Ontario and you look at the way services are being changed in terms of moving them into the community and making sure that people get health care and home care at home rather than in an acute-care bed, that kind of transformation has the benefit of saving money and delivering better service. That's what we're talking—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Michael Harris: Premier, you have consistently raised transit fares, while adding more than 225 Metrolinx employees to the sunshine list since 2007. With hundreds of Metrolinx staff already making more than \$100,000 a year, could you explain how many more will soon be added to the sunshine list with your 8.5% wage increase?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that we believe that supporting and investing in transit, whether it is GO service, whether it's municipal transit—we actually have that as a foundation of our economic plan. We know how important it is to the people who travel regionally in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, and to people across the province. Making those investments in transit and transportation infrastructure is foundational to our plan.

The member opposite is going to try to undermine that plan. He is going to try to make a critique of that plan that will stick.

In fact, we know that people want more investment in transit. They want to be able to travel on full-day, two-

way GO. That is the plan that we are putting forward. Those are the investments that we are going to make, and it will benefit his constituents, Mr. Speaker.

FISCAL REVIEW

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday I called on the Premier to support a review of the fiscal plan by the Auditor General. It's exactly what the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act calls for: an independent review of the government's budget in each election year. It's the only time when the auditor actually examines the government's revenue projections, the government's expense estimates and the government's fiscal assumptions. It's the one opportunity for Ontarians to hear from an independent officer about whether the budget can be trusted.

My question is a simple one, Speaker: Will the Premier submit her fiscal plan for review by the auditor or not?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: So we'll go over this again: The Auditor General looks at our finances every year as part of public accounts. This is happening now, and that report will be tabled in the fall. We were on track to have a pre-election audit until the NDP and the PCs decided that it was time for an election. Otherwise that would have happened.

The fact is that, as I said yesterday, the leader of the third party is looking for any reason, whether it is real or illusory, not to support the budget that we have put forward, not to support the initiatives that will help the very families whom she references on a regular basis. That's what she's doing, Mr. Speaker.

We know that the Auditor General will do her work and that that report will be tabled in the fall.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, it looks to me like the Premier is grasping for any reason not to be up front with the people about the state of the province's finances.

In 2004, the Premier actually supported the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act to crack down on the notoriously inaccurate budgets that governments campaign on. Back then, she understood, that independent oversight in election years is actually a good idea. Today, the Premier can follow through by requesting, under section 17 of the Auditor General Act, that the auditor promptly review the fiscal plan and report publicly on her findings.

Will the Premier do the right thing and request that independent review today, Speaker?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We made it clear that we were on track to have that audit done. There was an election that was called as a result of the actions of the NDP and the Conservatives, Mr. Speaker, and we made a commitment to come back and make sure—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek come to order. The member

from Eglinton–Lawrence, come to order. Minister of Government Services, come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And again, the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Carry on, please. Finish up.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that the election happened because the NDP and the Conservatives decided not to support the budget, the budget that we have reintroduced.

I want to quote from the Standard and Poor's report from yesterday: "Ontario's financial management is strong, in our view. The level of transparency and disclosure in its financial"—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, there's a big difference, and this Premier knows it, between the auditor's annual reports and what we are asking for today and what we asked for yesterday. Election years are the one time when the auditor looks forward, not backwards, and assesses the government's plan for the next three years. That's how the auditor caught this very government in 2011 using overly optimistic projections that put the province at risk for higher deficits, in fact, the very same higher deficit that we see today.

So my question is simple and it deserves a straightforward answer from this Premier, Speaker. Will the Premier respect the act or will she not?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We would have had that review had the election not been called, Mr. Speaker, and that was the leader of the third party's decision.

Let me quote from Standard and Poor's yesterday:

"Ontario's financial management is strong, in our view. The level of transparency and disclosure in its financial statements is high: notes and schedules provide detailed information about core government agencies and boards, and business enterprises. The independent Auditor General audits the province's financial statements." Mr. Speaker, that is the reality.

The report will be tabled in the fall. We were on track to have that review, but the election has happened and we made a commitment to bring the budget back. That's what we're doing, and we are going to work to implement that budget if it passes in this Legislature.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

New question.

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FISCAL REVIEW

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. For weeks New Democrats have been asking straightforward questions about the Premier's fire sale of public assets, her cuts to public services and her layoffs of up to 100,000 people. She has refused to answer those questions, Speaker, questions that families are asking.

That's her decision, but it doesn't mean that Ontarians have to live in the dark. We can get answers by calling on the Auditor General, if only this Premier will allow it. Why is the Premier refusing to allow independent verification of her election budget?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure will come to order.

Please carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Despite the rhetoric coming from the leader of the third party, the fact is that we have put in place a group, led by Ed Clark, who is looking at our assets and is working to give us advice on how to optimize those assets. Those are assets that are owned by the people of Ontario, and I believe that it is responsible for us to make sure that they are working to the best advantage of the people of the province.

The Auditor General and the people of the province can see that the details of that are on page 164 of the budget. But that work is ongoing. Those decisions have not been made. So the suggestion from the leader of the third party that somehow there is a nefarious plot and decisions that have already been made that are being kept from the people of Ontario is just not the reality.

The work is ongoing. We are going to review those assets. Ed Clark is doing that work for us. He is going to give us advice, and then we will make it clear what our intentions are.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, what's nefarious is a government that's not prepared to answer straightforward questions about its own budget. That's what's nefarious. This Premier is refusing to answer those basic questions, and she's preventing the Auditor General from giving us those answers. That's very odd, because this very Premier supported the auditor's review in 2004, in 2007 and in 2011. Why is she standing in the way of the auditor's review now that she's in charge?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Here's a more immediate and puzzling question, Mr. Speaker. The leader of the third party based her platform on our fiscal plan, then said she was going to cut \$600 million, and now she's not supporting any part of our plan. She's not supporting \$2.5 billion in the Jobs and Prosperity Fund. She's not supporting \$130 billion in infrastructure investments. She's not supporting a made-in-Ontario retirement pension plan. She's not supporting increasing the Ontario Child Benefit. She's not supporting \$810 million in supports for adults with developmental disabilities. She's not supporting expanding low-income health benefits, and she's not supporting \$20 million for expansion of student nutrition programs.

I think it's very puzzling as to why she's not supporting those things. Maybe she has an answer for the people of Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I think the people of Ontario will be disappointed to see that they have a Premier who's not supporting fundamental transparency and accountability of her budget, Speaker.

In 2004, the member from Eglinton-Lawrence supported the budget oversight by the Auditor General by saying, "No governing party can again pull the wool over our eyes." He was right. It's a good idea to get the auditor to look at the books every single election year, without exception. No one should be above the rules, and no election should become an excuse to avoid fundamental oversight.

Why does the Premier think that Dalton McGuinty's transparency and accountability measures are too good for her own government?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I actually don't, Mr. Speaker. As I said, we were on track to have that review, but there was an election called as a result of the NDP and the Conservatives not supporting the budget. We ran on that budget, Mr. Speaker. The Auditor General is looking at our fiscal fundamentals, and that report will be tabled in the fall.

The fact is that the plan we ran on had \$50 million for a new Local Poverty Reduction Fund in it. The leader of the third party is not supporting that. There's child care modernization and investments in early learning in our budget. The leader of the third party is not supporting that. She's not supporting wage increases for personal support workers. She's not supporting new funding for long-term-care homes. She's not supporting a comprehensive aboriginal action plan. I think that the people of Ontario deserve to know why she and her party are not supporting those progressive measures.

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. In a press conference on Friday, the minister admitted that the goal of his government's youth jobs strategy is to create opportunities and experience, not meaningful long-term employment. He added that his programs don't have a good long-term success rate. But yesterday, in a staged, set-up, lob ball question in this House from the member for Burlington, the minister bragged about the success of his youth job programs.

Why was the minister saying one thing on Friday and something very different in this House yesterday?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I might suggest the member directly quote me next time instead of saying things that I'm allegedly saying.

The fact of the matter is, our youth jobs strategy has created 20,000 job opportunities for young people since September.

Here's the good news, because we've been very clear about that: When it comes to the youth employment fund, it's four-to-six-month opportunities to experience real-life employment, and 95% of the students—the 4,800

who have gone through the program so far—have been retained by those businesses or have found jobs elsewhere. Mr. Speaker, I don't expect it to stay at that level of retention. I think that would be unrealistic. But the program is off to a great start: 20,000 job opportunities since the fall. That's phenomenal. We're proud of the program, and we're going to keep working at it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Mr. Speaker, the press were at the event on Friday. They heard what he said.

A cynic once said that a political gaffe is when a politician accidentally tells the truth. The minister's behaviour in recent days serves to reinforce this view.

The truth is that the youth unemployment rate in Ontario is at more than 15% today. Surely this is unacceptable to the minister, just as it should be to all members of this House. We've all met bright, enthusiastic young people who have their degrees or certificates and who are discouraged because after months or even years of trying, they can't find that career-track first job.

If the minister knows that his programs aren't working, as he seemed to understand on Friday, when will he announce a youth jobs strategy that will work?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, 20,000 jobs created for young people—20,000 job opportunities for young people created since the fall. You find me a program that has been more successful anywhere in North America than our youth jobs strategy. I bet you can't.

We recognize that youth unemployment is too high. That's why the Premier asked me and my colleague to bring forward a youth jobs strategy. We're responding. We're creating those opportunities. We're increasing entrepreneurial opportunities. We're building on our innovation agenda to help those young people who want to create jobs or start their own businesses.

Mr. Speaker, you cannot find a program—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Hon. Brad Duguid: —anywhere in North America—*Interjections.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

I'm going to use this opportunity, now that I've stopped the clock, to remind all members that this is part of the problem when you don't address the Chair. When I stand, you sit. If you end up arguing with somebody across the way, you don't see that I'm standing and you're not sitting when you should. All of us would be better served if you direct your questions and answers to the Chair.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Premier. On page 4 of the Liberal Party's infrastructure platform—and I took a look at it again this morning—it clearly says this government's plan is to pocket \$3.15 billion from the sale of public assets. Neither you, Premier, nor the Min-

ister of Finance have explained how much of this money is going to come from the sale of all or part of the LCBO, Ontario Power Generation or Hydro One. Will the Premier finally tell the House how much is slotted into the government's fiscal framework from the full or partial sale of these core public assets?

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Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: We are doing a full review of our assets—for LCBO, OLG and OPA. We're looking at all of our assets, including real estate and those shares that we own in private companies, and we're going to ensure that we maximize opportunity to increase dividends to the province of Ontario, and to the taxpayers who own these organizations. It's prudent for us to do so.

The member, I appreciate, has looked at some of the numbers, and he'll be able to reflect on the fact that the valuations of many of these organizations are tremendous. What we want to do is safeguard the public interest and be fully transparent in the things that we do.

In the meantime, some of the things that we are going to roll out are very quick to suggest: some of the real estate that is owned by the province, and some of the shares that we own, as well. That is part of what we are going to be doing in the short term.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Well, Speaker, that was hardly an answer. Let's face it: When you put that figure into your platform, someone, hopefully, had a sense of the ballpark value of what would be coming from those different asset sales. How much of that \$3.15 billion from the sale of the LCBO, OPG and Hydro One is allocated to those assets, or was your number just a guess in the platform?

Hon. Charles Sousa: We're unlocking value of our assets. We're not suggesting that we're going to sell any three of those organizations that you've just mentioned. We want to maximize the potential of the revenue generated from those organizations.

We are looking at assets that can be sold in the short term. I've just stated that there's a number of properties and real estate that we own as a landlord that are unproductive. We also have shares in various companies that, again, are passive, and they can be better reinvested into the Trillium Trust to produce transportation and infrastructure—things that make us competitive.

Those are tabulated, and those will be the things that we are going to release. It would be inappropriate for me to suggest anything until the review has been done. Furthermore, it's also implicating the public interest by going public with some of the valuations of these companies. That too is inappropriate. We are looking after the public interest, and we will continue to do so.

WINTER ROAD MAINTENANCE

Mr. Grant Crack: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, Ontario does have the safest roads in North America, something all Ontarians can be proud of. As the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell,

I travel almost 1,500 kilometres a week, Mr. Speaker. We recognize how important it is to keep our roads safe.

Contrary to the gorgeous humid weather outside today, we know that winters can be harsh in the province. We saw that last winter, with more storms than we've been used to in quite some time. This affects how people do things every day, including business, or even going grocery shopping, which I love.

Some of my constituents have expressed concerns about our roads during winter, particularly after storms, and they're concerned about how fast we clean the roadways of snow and ice. Through you, Speaker, can the minister please speak to the improvements that this government has made in our winter road maintenance programs?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to thank the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for his question, and for his advocacy. That member is quite correct: Ontario has some of the safest roads across North America. In fact, Speaker, we are so committed to road safety that here we are in the middle of July—or near the end of July—talking about winter maintenance, even when the temperatures outside today are hovering around 30 degrees.

Our winter maintenance standards are among the highest or best in North America, but we are always looking to improve our winter maintenance program. As an example, this past winter, we added 55 additional winter maintenance units, and 42 of those additional units were provided to northern Ontario.

We have made significant investments in roads across Ontario to ensure that they are safe, no matter the season, and I'm happy to report to the House that the Ministry of Transportation will provide all interested MPPs with a technical briefing on this particular issue come this fall.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you, minister, for that very comprehensive answer. My riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell is a great place to live and do business. That's why it's important to have safe roads for every type of commuter.

I understand that Ontario's winter road maintenance is performed by maintenance contractors, and my constituents are interested in knowing more about these contractors. The people in my riding want to make sure that they're getting good value for their tax dollars. They also want to know who is keeping their roads safe when the snow is falling and on the ground.

Through you, Speaker, could the minister please speak to Ontario's relationship with our contractors?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to thank the member again for his supplementary question and for the fantastic work he does on behalf of the people of his community.

As he mentioned, contracts with area maintenance contractors are performance-based. Our contractors bid in a competitive environment for their contracts, and there are 31 performance indicators that contractors are required to meet. The number one indicator is making sure that the roads have bare pavement, clean of all ice and snow. Bare pavement ensures safety for all commuters.

The Ministry of Transportation has always had a good relationship with the contractors' association, the Ontario Road Builders' Association, and we look forward to continuing our strong working relationship with this association leading up to the next winter season, although I'm sure we can all agree, we hope winter doesn't come too soon.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Premier. Premier, as you travelled the province during the election, you were greeted by wind turbine protestors in almost every rural riding. Obviously, these Ontarians are fed up. They have watched their pristine rural landscapes destroyed by costly wind turbines that carry a myriad of consequences.

You have said that you want to improve the approval process for wind developments to allow for more local input. However, you stated on numerous occasions that you remain fully committed to wind turbines. The fact that you have not given municipalities the final say over wind turbine development indicates to me that this promise is more smoke and mirrors than anything else.

Premier, which is it? Do you want to continue to push unwanted wind farms on rural communities, or will you finally step up and give local municipalities a true say in their communities?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I think we just need to be clear. What is happening is the OPA, the Ontario Power Authority, is creating a new competitive bidding process in which projects that have the support of local communities will be given priority. When we said that we were going to work with communities to make sure there was much more buy-in, that municipalities would have a greater say in siting renewable energy projects—that's exactly what we have done. That's exactly what we have done. In fact, the OPA and the IESO have engaged with municipalities, with First Nation leaders, with community associations and with others to get that input. That's the work that was done in order to come up with a process that actually weights those projects that have community buy-in.

What the member opposite is asking for is a veto. The member opposite is basically saying that he doesn't support the renewable energy industry—we know that—but we do. We know how important it is to the future of the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Back to the Premier: Premier I'm asking for the veto for our municipalities just like rural Ontario vetoed the Liberals.

The west end of my riding borders on the Chatham-Kent region, where residents have had hundreds of turbines forced upon them. Those in my riding who live in West Elgin and Dutton/Dunwich look to the west and fear the same thing will happen to them. In fact, there is a development proposal currently on the table.

Residents in West Elgin fear for their health, their property values and the destruction of the social fabric. It's one of the reasons West Elgin council voted to be an unwilling host to this development. Also, the municipality of Dutton/Dunwich issued a survey to area residents; 84% of the residents do not want wind turbines in Dutton/Dunwich. Clearly, it's an unwanted project.

Premier, will you listen to the will of the local municipalities? Or do you think the people in my riding are just wrong?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me first say I would love to introduce the member opposite to some of our new members—the members who represent the rural constituents, for example, in Northumberland—Quinte West, Durham and Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. I'm sure that there are some rural constituents who would feel quite insulted by the comments of the member opposite.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is that we have made changes to the process. We have consulted with communities across the province, and the OPA is putting in place a competitive bidding process that actually weights the siting of projects towards municipalities that are open to them and are interested in having them. I have said in this House that if I could roll back the clock and if we could have had that process from the beginning, that would be a good thing; but the fact is, we can't. We need to have a process that takes those concerns into account now. That's what we have.

We will continue to work with municipalities to make sure that we have a renewable industry in this province and that we have the cleanest air and the cleanest energy anywhere.

1110

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Minister of Health. When patients need care at a hospital, they shouldn't have to pay through the nose just to park their car. But after three years of frozen budgets from this government, hospitals are passing the buck to patients by charging up to \$25 a day.

This government's health care austerity has let parking fees get out of control, and patients are paying the price. Will the minister admit that another year of hospital austerity will only leave families falling further behind?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm glad to hear from the third party that there is another piece of our platform that you like, because you didn't mention in the campaign nor in your platform capping parking fees. It's a commitment we made during the election and in our platform, and we stand by that commitment.

Our government is going to bring in a realistic plan to help Ontarians with their living costs today as they pertain to hospital parking fees. I've engaged my ministry; I've asked them at the earliest possible moment for us to come up with a reasonable plan that reflects not only the need for hospitals to be able to generate sufficient revenue for their activities, but addresses this priority issue

to make sure that patients and their families have access to those hospitals and that costs should not and will not be an impediment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Miss Monique Taylor: This government has made many promises but they refuse to talk about the actual budget. The fact is that this Trojan Horse budget continues to squeeze our health care system. Patients in Hamilton have seen a 25% increase in hospital parking fees this spring. They're being charged \$25 a day before they even enter the hospital to get the treatment they need. That's not what public health care should be.

Will this minister tell Ontarians why there is nothing in this budget to get outrageous parking lot user fees under control?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Well, Mr. Speaker, I remain confused by the supplementary question because I was very clear, I think, in my first response that this is an issue that is a priority for this side of the Legislature. It was not a priority for the third party, for the NDP. We made a commitment in the platform and during the campaign to address this issue as it's an important issue for many Ontarians. Just to repeat, Mr. Speaker, we remain committed. Our government will bring in a realistic plan to help individuals across the province address the issue of parking fees in hospitals.

I don't understand why the member from the third party can't accept this commitment and "yes" as an answer to her question, but if it had been a priority, I wish you would have addressed it during the campaign. You didn't; we did. We're following through on that commitment.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Arthur Potts: My question is to the Minister of Education. I was very pleased to see the government reintroduce the Child Care Modernization Act just a week ago. I know that in my riding of Beaches—East York, as in so many of your ridings, many families and child care operators will benefit significantly from these changes. I understand that this bill, if passed, will strengthen oversight of the province's unlicensed child care sector while increasing access to licensed child care options for families.

I'm even more pleased that our government has placed a priority on reforming a piece of legislation that hasn't been changed for 30 years, which neither of the parties opposite took the time to amend in their time in office.

So much of this proposed legislation is aimed at addressing oversight within the unlicensed sector. Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister, can she describe how the legislation will strengthen and improve oversight?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Congratulations to the member from Beaches—East York, who gave a great maiden speech last week.

The member is absolutely correct. This legislation is well overdue for a comprehensive update. That is why in December 2013 our government first introduced the Child

Care Modernization Act. Unfortunately, debate was cut short; we had this election happen. But I'm proud of the legislation, and we have reintroduced it in this House. It will, if passed, improve oversight in the unlicensed sector and modernize the province's child care system.

Well over a year ago, we began to consult with parents and stakeholders on how to update the legislation. If passed, the Child Care Modernization Act—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer?

Hon. Liz Sandals: —will allow the province to immediately shut down a child care provider when a child's safety is at risk. It will clarify what—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Arthur Potts: I thank the minister for her response and particularly for her commendations on my inaugural speech.

I also know that our government has already taken steps to improve the oversight of child care. These include a dedicated enforcement team to investigate complaints against unlicensed operators and the development of online searchable databases of validated complaints.

We need to take further action to strengthen oversight in the child care sector. Mr. Speaker, through you: Can the minister please share with the House why this piece of legislation is critical and why it needs to move through the legislative process?

Hon. Liz Sandals: The Child Care Modernization Act makes a number of amendments—or a number of things that will improve oversight and organization of the child care sector. In addition to those things I already mentioned, it will improve access to licensed child care and support parent choice; it will enhance and clarify the provincial, municipal and First Nations partnerships in the child care sector; and it would amend the Education Act to ensure school boards offer before- and after-school programs for six to 12-year-olds when there is sufficient demand. It will also ensure for the first time that Ministry of Education inspectors have the authority to impose administrative penalties of up to \$100,000 when people break—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer?

Hon. Liz Sandals: —the unlicensed home care rules.

Speaker, it is absolutely critical that we get this act passed. I look forward—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. The Magnetawan River in my riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka is a natural feature that shapes a number of communities. With headwaters in Algonquin Park, the river flows through Burk's Falls, Magnetawan and Magnetawan First Nation before emptying into Byng Inlet at Britt on Georgian Bay.

In recent years, there have been issues with increased silt levels being deposited into the river. This causes

higher turbidity of the water and it is plainly visible from a number of locations.

I met with concerned constituents who have spent their lives living near the river, who know the river. They have never seen it muddied up like it has been this year. Ryerson township council has also contacted me with regard to this important issue.

Minister, what is being done by your government to protect the Magnetawan River?

Hon. Bill Mauro: Thank you to the member for the question and an opportunity to respond. I don't mind saying it's an issue that I have not been briefed on. I have not received any correspondence from the member on this particular issue.

I guess if I were to look for a parallel, I would perhaps talk about what we deal with on a regular basis when we think of lower or higher water levels in the Great Lakes when we are called upon to make decisions on how we're going to maintain the integrity of ecological systems, water levels, and their impact on local communities.

As I mentioned in my opening remark, I have not heard from the member on this. I'm happy to work with him to see what's possible and what we can bring to the table to help the affected community and the people around there who use this river system. I look forward to discussing it in greater length with the member on a go-forward basis.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: Thank you, Minister. There are currently two solar farms that lie in very close proximity to the Magnetawan River near Burk's Falls. Through your government and the Green Energy Act, permits for these projects were approved. The removal of natural vegetation is surely a contributing factor to the significant runoff deposited into the river during seasonal rain events so far this summer.

The full effects of greater sediment levels entering the river and the subsequent impact on the natural ecosystem of the Magnetawan are unknown. Minister, will you commit to looking into this issue to ensure that this important natural resource can continue to be enjoyed by future generations?

Hon. Bill Mauro: Again, I thank the member for the question. As I mentioned in the opening remark, I have not heard from the member on this particular issue. He has now in his supplementary connected what's going on with the river system to a green energy project. I would have appreciated having heard from the member on the particular issue; we haven't. I commit to working with him and the community on the issue on a go-forward basis. I thank him for the heads up I got through question period.

1120

JURY SELECTION

Ms. Sarah Campbell: To the Premier: In the recent throne speech, this government reaffirmed its commitment to Ontario's First Nations people, and yet last week we learned that a long-promised public inquest into the

tragic deaths of seven First Nations youth in Thunder Bay won't be proceeding now, any time soon, or maybe ever. The chief coroner, an officer of this House, made the decision not to proceed, saying that ongoing issues with the underrepresentation of First Nations on juries in Thunder Bay is an issue, and also that the complexity of the issue is a contributing factor as to why there will not be an inquest. Seven youths who had to leave their home communities in order to get a high school education have wound up dead. Families and northerners have been waiting for over 10 years for answers, and they're still waiting.

Will this government take immediate steps to rectify the underrepresentation of First Nations on juries so we can finally go forward with this inquest?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Hon. David Zimmer: Thank you for that question and for raising this very important issue. I can tell the member opposite that about this time last year I was in Thunder Bay and I met with the parents of the students who had been killed. They had been brought into one of the local high schools and they were doing some preparation work, getting ready for the inquest which was to start at about this time.

Along with that we have the Iacobucci report, which made certain recommendations about the selection of jurors on criminal panels. The coroner has also suggested that those same recommendations ought to be implemented into coroner's juries so that there is sufficient representation of First Nation members on a coroner's jury. Accordingly, he has adjourned the inquest so that he can make arrangements to perhaps work with some of the recommendations in the Iacobucci report to ensure that First Nations participate not only in criminal juries and civil juries, but in coroner's juries.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Jethro Anderson, 15; Curran Strang, 18; Paul Panacheese, 17; Robyn Harper, 18; Reggie Bushie, 15; Kyle Morriveau, 17; and Jordan Wabasse, 15—their mothers and families deserve answers.

You have to wonder, if it was seven kids somewhere in southwestern Ontario who died tragically, would there be any hesitation to overcome the roadblocks and call an inquest to get to the bottom of it?

Will this government finally take action to address the systemic issues with jury selection the coroner cited as preventing a public inquest from going forward, and call an inquest into the deaths of these youth right away?

Hon. David Zimmer: Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thanks to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs for providing clarity in the first answer.

Ontario is very committed to building strong relationships with First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban aboriginal partners. Working together, Speaker, we can improve opportunities and outcomes for aboriginal youth and their families. We are currently developing an Aboriginal Children and Youth Strategy to transform how services

are designed and delivered to improve outcomes for aboriginal children and youth. This outcome is under way. It's very community-driven, integrating culturally appropriate supports for children so that services can better meet their needs.

As the new Minister of Children and Youth Services, I look forward very much to spearheading this in co-operation with my colleagues and my critic for children and youth services.

CITIZENS' AWARDS

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: My question is to the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade. In my community of Halton there are many examples of outstanding contributions from remarkable constituents who have made our community a better place to work and live. Former and current residents like astronaut Chris Hadfield and Olympian Travis Gerrits are two examples of exemplary individuals who have made exceptional contributions to our community and our province. Honors and awards are one of the best ways that outstanding citizens in Halton and across Ontario can be recognized for their contributions to their communities. They acknowledge achievements and celebrate people's deep commitments to making communities like Halton the thriving, caring and communal places they are.

Mr. Speaker, through to the minister, how can Ontarians recognize exceptional members in their communities?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you very much for the question.

Speaker, this is the first time I have received a question from the new member. I worked with the member in the past, and I can tell you she will be a great MPP for the people of Halton.

Speaker, Ontario is a land of opportunity, incredibly diverse, and many, many people have done great things. This is why Ontario has a number of honours and awards that recognize individuals who, through exceptional long-term efforts, have made outstanding contributions to their community. These prestigious honours include the Order of Ontario, the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship, the Ontario Medal for Young Volunteers, the Ontario Award for Leadership in Immigrant Employment, the Lincoln M. Alexander Award, the June Callwood Outstanding Achievement Award, and the Ontario Newcomer Champion Award, just to name a few.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you, Minister, for providing great insight into this very important cause.

Mr. Speaker, Halton's first responders are among the best in the province. Every day, these outstanding individuals put their lives on the line to protect and serve the great residents of my community. Our police and firefighters' courage and life-saving skills often make the difference between life and death.

I know first-hand the outstanding work that these first responders do. From their presence in the community to

assisting Halton residents through challenging times of distress, they can always be counted on to be there when we need them most. When we are in greatest need, they are always there to help and protect us and our families.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: How does the province recognize the great bravery of police officers and firefighters in Halton and Ontario?

Hon. Michael Chan: I again want to thank the honourable member for her question.

I also want to remind all of the members of this House that nominations for the Ontario medals for firefighter and police bravery are fast approaching. Both of these honourable medals recognize individual acts of outstanding courage and bravery by members of Ontario's fire-fighting and police services.

For more information on how to nominate a police officer or firefighter from your community, I invite all of you to please visit the Ontario honours and awards website today at www.citizenship.gov.on.ca.

Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank police and firefighters for their hard work, day in and day out, to serve and protect us all.

JOB CREATION

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. Minister, I recently wrote you, just as I wrote your predecessors, asking you to review a proposal from Georgian College to invest \$2 million from the public infrastructure funds program to move the marine emergency duties training and research program to their Owen Sound campus. As you know, MED is a compulsory training program for the marine industry and is currently unavailable anywhere in central Canada. It provides jobs such as marine engineers, mechanics, technicians and navigators, which are all required to sustain this \$6-billion industry.

Your government opted to give \$220 million in public dollars to a private firm called Cisco, yet gave no such support to a public institution that plays a key role in the economy of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and the province.

My question to you is simple, Minister: Do you agree that public infrastructure money should be going to public institutions? Yes or no?

Hon. Brad Duguid: What I believe, Mr. Speaker, is that the PC Party should be supporting our budget, which is going to invest \$130 billion over 10 years in infrastructure programs that will be going to public institutions, including building transit, including investing in training, colleges and university facilities and including investing in health care and education buildings. That's what I believe, and I would think that the member would agree with that, and if he does, he should support our upcoming budget.

That being said, the member brought this to my attention in my previous post, prior to the election, and it's something that we are looking into on his behalf. He did, as he said, provide me with information on it yesterday.

I'm going to refer to my colleague the Minister of Training, College and Universities, who has carriage of this matter, in the supplementary, but I do thank the member for bringing it to my attention.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?
1130

Mr. Bill Walker: Actually, I want to go back to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. Minister, you suggested in yesterday's question period that nobody in North America was doing more for young people than your Liberal government. I suggest to you that Georgian College is a key investment in post-secondary education and skills training for our youth. If you make it a priority, I believe you could actually leverage Infrastructure Canada funds and make this project a reality.

So, Minister, here is an opportunity to take real action as opposed to just talk and make a critical infrastructure investment that would be a key source of jobs at a time when unemployment is stuck at 7% and youth unemployment hovers at a critical 21% in Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Minister, with the \$130 billion that you've allocated for public infrastructure, are you prepared to support this critical investment in a public institution and ensure that Georgian College remains a key leader in our education sector and supports the sustainability of the valued marine sector in Ontario?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'd refer this to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities and Research and Innovation.

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member opposite for that question. It's crucial for us and also for the industry to make sure that marine emergency duty training is going on in our colleges, including Georgian College.

It was the federal government, actually, that closed this place, and it was this government last year that invested \$500,000 to continue the courses for marine navigation and engineering students at Georgian College. We also helped the college to transfer some of their equipment from the federal government to this organization. It is the key to making sure that Georgian College will continue offering this course. We will work with our federal counterparts. As you know, negotiations with the various levels of government take time and we are in negotiation with the federal government. Also, I look forward to talking to municipal leaders at the AMO conference in the future.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr. Michael Mantha: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning. My question is to the Minister of Finance.

Last week, we alerted you to the possible financial crisis many communities could face with the clawback of the Power Dam Special Payment Program. We urge you to work with Wawa, which will lose 47% of their tax base. Last week, you indicated that you were in com-

munication with Wawa to discuss these matters, but the mayor and council have no record of any communication from you on this vital issue—zero, nada, goose egg, bupkis, rien, pas un mot, nothing.

Minister, when can the people of Wawa expect to hear from you?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite brings forward a matter of great importance to the people of Wawa and to other communities in the north. I very clearly stated that they will be contacted and we will have those deliberations. I've noted that we are going to increase funding to the municipalities. In fact, our budget talks about continuing to support the municipalities, something which, by the way, the member opposite is going to reject by voting away and voting down a budget that's very progressive and talks about supports for the municipalities.

Notwithstanding that, I will continue to work with the city council. We have made clear that our officials will reach out to the council and to Wawa to find ways to support the communities that will be affected adversely as a result of the extraordinary effects this would have on that particular community.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Again to the Minister of Finance: Minister, you seem to think that it's only the community of Wawa that will suffer greatly with the clawback of this program. Wawa may be the hardest hit, but other communities will be in dire straits and will lose significant amounts of money from the power dam compensation program. To add insult to injury, these communities haven't received a penny of the monies owed to them from this year and their cash is drained.

When will your government make good on outstanding payments so these communities can pay their bills?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, maybe he didn't hear the first response. I did say, "communities like Wawa and others that would be affected." I did state that there's a consultation process that's going to be under way, that they will reach out to those communities that will be affected to ensure they are not adversely affected.

I also said that OMPF funding has been increased and that supports for the municipalities will continue to ensure that the communities are continuing to have what's necessary, unlike what the oppositions have now stated. By opposing this budget, by opposing the progressive nature of what we're putting forward, they are the ones putting them in harm's way. We know that some of the effects that have been proposed in the budget would adversely affect certain communities. We will address them. We're going through those consultations, and our officials will reach out to them. They know that, and we'll continue to proceed to protect them. But, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite should stand with this budget to support all communities all across the province of Ontario.

LAND USE PLANNING

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, last August, your predecessor, Minister Jeffrey, announced our government's intention to begin consultations on changing our land use planning and development charges system. Now, almost a year from that announcement, my constituents have numerous questions about what changes we may make to the land use planning and appeals system. They have found the current process complicated, difficult to navigate and even harder to understand.

Minister, our government needs to ensure that our planning system works well for municipalities and community groups, as well as developers, while remaining responsive to the changing needs of our community. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, can you explain to my constituents what has happened to the feedback that they have given to help change the land use planning system?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Well, Mr. Speaker, in the 11 seconds I have, I want to begin by thanking the honourable member for her question. Our government believes a strong land use planning system gives municipalities the tools to manage growth, so our cities can become communities and our streets can become neighbourhoods.

Many, however, find the current system difficult to navigate. We've heard from municipal leaders, planning officials and the public that the rules can sometimes be too complex, and delays and appeals too frustrating. That's why we're taking the input from consultations held in Kitchener-Waterloo, Sault Ste. Marie, Mississauga, Toronto, Thunder Bay, Ottawa and elsewhere to help our government move forward with a refresh of this important system. We'll continue to listen to everyday Ontarians, municipal politicians and community groups as we build the stronger, more vibrant communities that we all long for in Ontario.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Kenora-Rainy River has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs concerning the coroner's inquest into the deaths of seven First Nations youth. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

The member from Algoma-Manitoulin on a point of order.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We all have an opportunity to correct the record. Last week, the Minister of Finance had indicated that we were taking steps with the municipality of Wawa. In his reply to my question this morning, it certainly wasn't that—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. First of all, that is not a point of order, as the only time you correct a record is your own.

There are no deferred—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Further to that point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Another point of order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Just further to—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Not to that issue. Sit, please.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1138 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Arthur Potts: It gives me great pleasure to introduce two members of the board of the Bangladesh Centre and Community Services—they're here today with me—Serajul Kazi and Dr. Mahbub Reza. They are here, and they're accompanied by my constituency assistant, Nahid Sharif. I welcome them.

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Point of order, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I move, pursuant to standing order 8(e)—I wish to indicate that no business is to be called during orders of the day tomorrow morning.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank the government House leader for his announcement.

It is now time for—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Are the Liberals sleeping in?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Things were very kind when you were not here.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thought you guys promised me that—just not in the afternoon.

It is now time for members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

GEORGE SIMS

Mr. Rick Nicholls: While attending a variety of exciting events in my riding, you will often find the Chatham-Kent town crier George Sims. Named the former city of Chatham's town crier since 1991, George has served his community, and served it well, for almost 25 years.

He's won three Ontario town crier competitions and has won the North American championship once, while finishing second on two separate occasions.

George was also named Chatham's Citizen of the Year in 1996 and was recently awarded the Diamond Jubilee Medal.

A town crier's pride and joy is their bell, and George's bell was made from an oak bannister from Chatham's old Harrison Hall, also known as our town hall. As he rings his bell, you can hear George cry out "Oyez, oyez, oyez."

His uniform consists of three significant colours: blue, green and gold. In George's words:

"Blue represents Chatham-Kent's many historic rivers, beautiful bays, splendid lakes and wonderful waterways.

"Green depicts Chatham-Kent's tapestry of a myriad of abundant acclaimed agricultural displays.

"Gold symbolizes Chatham-Kent's residents working, playing and giving in so many ways."

Speaker, I've known George for over 40 years, and I'm very thankful for his years of service and dedication to our community as a teacher, coach and town crier. I look forward to seeing him at local events for years to come.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I think we need an arm-wrestling match over here.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Miss Monique Taylor: It was my honour and my privilege to serve on the Select Committee on Developmental Services, and I was relieved that the committee was resurrected so that we could complete our work and make formal recommendations from the committee. Today, Speaker, our report will be tabled.

Last week, when another member of this House asked the Premier when and if she was planning on bringing the committee together, she did not commit. Instead, she spoke of the money the government was putting forward to the sector, and I had serious concerns with that, Speaker.

I had concerns that the people who gave testimonies to the committee, people who lived daily with extraordinary challenges in their life and in the system, would not see their voices, their advice and their suggestions reflected in the recommendations from the committee. I had concerns that the Liberal government, which for years let this sector run underfunded and left families falling into crisis, would once again say that they know best. I believe the members of her own party were shocked by her statements, and I believe that they, too, felt relief when the committee was finally struck.

I am proud of the report that's being tabled today, and I am proud of the work that we accomplished together. I look forward to the government's response to our recommendations. I am hopeful that our recommendations will be implemented and not used as a political football, but as a plan that will make fundamental changes in the lives of those the system serves. They are among the most vulnerable in our province, and they deserve to have stability in their future.

MIRACLE LEAGUE OF OTTAWA LIGUE MIRACLE D'OTTAWA

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I rise today asking for the help of my colleagues on all sides of the House. This

is my second time bringing attention to the Miracle League of Ottawa, the only Ontario finalist in a national community development competition. The organization wants to build an accessible park and baseball diamond, and the prize of \$100,000 will go a long way to making this dream a reality.

While I know we don't agree on everything, I am confident that all members of this House can agree that a baseball diamond and playground for children with disabilities is a project we should all support.

Nous avons cette rare opportunité de se rassembler tous ensemble pour une cause commune afin de faire une grande différence dans la vie de milliers d'enfants qui font face à des besoins spéciaux. Un simple clic sur votre ordinateur aujourd'hui au profit de la Ligue Miracle d'Ottawa permettra à cet organisme extraordinaire de gagner 100 000 \$ pour pouvoir construire un terrain de baseball et un parc d'amusement pour tous ces enfants.

Please join me in spreading the word about this incredible organization. Tweet, send emails, post on Facebook and, most importantly, vote. Vote for Ottawa's families, vote for accessibility, and vote for the right of every child to play outside: www.kraftcelebrationtour.ca. We only have nine hours left to vote. Cast your ballots. I thank you very much.

ANNALEISE CARR

Mr. Toby Barrett: Two years ago in this House, we praised the accomplishments of Annaleise Carr, a teenager from my riding. Those of you who were here last term will remember her as a legislative page. You will remember the headlines she made both provincially and internationally by becoming the youngest person to swim across Lake Ontario. This weekend, she will be seeking a new record by trying to swim across the longest distance of Lake Erie.

Annaleise does fundraisers for Camp Trillium. It's a camp in my riding for children with cancer. In fact, raising money for Camp Trillium is the driving force behind Annaleise becoming a marathon swimmer. She has already raised \$200,000, and she has a target of another \$200,000.

Following the last swim, Annaleise was the 2012 World Open Water Swimming Association Woman of the Year. She received the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal from Prime Minister Harper and was an Ontario Junior Citizen of the Year.

This Saturday, join me on the beach at Port Dover when Annaleise sets foot on the Canadian side of Lake Erie after swimming from Erie, Pennsylvania, to set a new world record. She will have swum 75 kilometres and have been in the water for well over a day.

EMERGING LEADERS

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Today, I'd like to take the opportunity to introduce to the House a unique organization in my hometown of London called Emerging

Leaders. They are a dynamic non-profit group seeking to engage, develop and retain London's most important asset, our emerging leaders, leaders who drive our communities, to go above and beyond, to do the best they can and strive to be inclusive, engaged and kind to each other.

We know that youth who are active in their community have a vested interest in that community's growth and development. They are also the spark our communities require to be successful, vibrant and diverse. Our communities must thrive not just in the present but well into the future.

We are all familiar with the concept of brain drain whereby youth from our small communities leave to relocate to larger cities. Emerging Leaders aims to prevent that potential loss by working actively to engage London's young adults and by encouraging their professional development, fostering entrepreneurship opportunities and emphasizing the importance of leadership.

Since its inception only a few years ago, Emerging Leaders has established itself as a significant pillar in the London community. I would like to thank Emerging Leaders and its members for their efforts that inspire young people to want to call London their home.

1510

INFRASTRUCTURE IN AJAX-PICKERING

Mr. Joe Dickson: I rise in the House today to speak to two of the significant ongoing projects in my riding of Ajax-Pickering: the 407 east highway and our beloved Rouge Valley Ajax-Pickering hospital.

The 407 east highway is currently on schedule, on budget and on track to become one of the most important transportation investments in the province's history. It is from Brock Road in Pickering all the way through to Highway 115 and Highway 35, which, of course, is on the east side of Durham. This \$1-billion investment will increase east-west transportation through my riding of Ajax-Pickering to get people moving quicker through Durham and the GTA.

This major infrastructure undertaking is complemented by the continued growth of our Ajax-Pickering hospital, which has seen constant new positions and programs added to support a growing population.

The hospital has recently added highly qualified medical professionals to the teams at both Rouge Valley's Ajax-Pickering and Centenary sites. This includes Cara Begg-Reid, a midwife from the multilingual Sages-Femmes Rouge Valley Midwives, who has both a midwifery degree and a degree in medical anthropology; and respected anesthesiologist Dr. Rachel Meyer.

The group includes midwives who speak multiple languages in order to assist expectant mothers of different cultures. That is a great comfort for expecting mothers.

Now we see that the CATCH program, Care After The Care in Hospital, has had 230 patients participate after receiving care, and none have been readmitted to the

hospital. This is helping patients cared for in the hospital ensure that they were not sent home too early—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I'm pretty close to the end.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, you are at the end.

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The end is nigh, Joe. The end is nigh.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I got it.

The member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

TOM THOMSON

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A tough act to follow.

I rise today to recognize two Canadian icons with roots in my riding of Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound. The iconic painter Tom Thomson, who inspired the formation of the Group of Seven, is the inspiration behind iconic clothing retailer Roots's new apparel and accessories collection.

Thomson is a great landscape artist who lived humbly but passionately with the wild and whose paintings captured the rugged yet beautiful Canadian outdoors. Thomson died in 1917, but his influential style lives on. The toque, the flannel shirt, the white long-sleeved shirts and other Thomson faves will be part of the exclusive Tom Thomson clothing collection available in most Roots stores, online and at Owen Sound's Tom Thomson Art Gallery, which is a partner in the project.

The idea began with Virginia Eichhorn, who is the art gallery's director and chief curator, and something of an icon in our local art community and across the province. According to Eichhorn, the similarities in the company's brand and Thomson were stark, so they were a natural fit for each other. Eichhorn quickly arranged to meet the company executives in Toronto, and their collaborative work began in earnest.

I encourage all members of the House and any viewers watching to visit the great Tom gallery in Owen Sound and check out the ongoing Canadian Spirit exhibition and to explore, celebrate and connect with Thomson and his legacy. The Canadian Spirit exhibition gives visitors an educational and entertaining introduction to Tom Thomson's life, his connections with Owen Sound and Grey county and the factors that led him to become one of Canada's greatest artists.

Canadian Spirit continues through to Canadian Spirit 2017: Someday, They Will Know What I Mean, marking the 100th anniversary of Thomson's death and the 150th anniversary of Canada, which will focus on ideas and issues around Canadian identity, its past and its evolution. The Canadian Spirit series will balance the honour owed to the past with the needs of the present, while always looking forward to the future.

CARABRAM

Ms. Harinder Malhi: Mr. Speaker, last weekend I had the opportunity to attend Carabram, a marvelous showcase of the cultural diversity of Brampton. Run entirely by volunteers, Carabram is a celebration of our multiculturalism and the diversity that defines us as an open and inclusive society.

I had the opportunity to learn more about the African, Pakistani, Irish, Macedonian, Filipino, Ukrainian and Indian cultures. They showcased ethnic fashions, performed folk dances and introduced us to delicious ethnic cuisines. It also gave me the opportunity to meet with my fellow Bramptonians who belong to these vibrant and diverse cultures.

Carabram's mission is to promote understanding and appreciation of the multiculturalism of Brampton, provide non-profit groups an opportunity to promote projects that benefit the entire community, and serve as an enlightening forum for all people. Carabram is an important celebration, and I am proud to have been a part of it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the organizers, sponsors and volunteers that worked so hard to showcase their cultures. I also want to thank them for their hospitality as I experienced the cultural displays of the world. Carabram is surely a model to be shared with the rest of Canada.

RAMADAN

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Members' statements? Oh, the member from Beaches—East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I've said repeatedly, this is a learning experience.

It gives me great pleasure to rise on behalf of the Muslim celebration of Ramadan. One of the amazing parts about living in and representing Beaches—East York is the very diverse communities I have a chance to interact with, including those in the Muslim faith. Shortly after being elected, I was invited to attend the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at at the International Centre with a number of my colleagues. Their mission, Mr. Speaker, is, "Love for all, hatred for none." It was an inspiring afternoon for me.

Our Muslim friends are all celebrating Ramadan now—it's the new moon to the new moon—in which they have an opportunity to fast during the day. I had the pleasure on Saturday night to attend an Iftar at the Bangladeshi community centre, resplendent with my Punjabi, and also with my executive assistant, who wore a Punjabi as well. We had the pleasure to break bread, break the fast with the members of the community, and it was a fantastic experience.

During the day, Mr. Speaker, prayers during the fasting occur. They're fasting in order to create a sense of humility, humility that they too are experiencing the hunger of poor people who don't have. But it's not just about humility; it's also about purity and purity from

passions where nothing bad will be heard, nothing bad will be seen and nothing bad will be spoken.

I asked one of my friends what he was praying for and he said, "A better world and a better place for my family." I thought, this is fantastic. We have so much more in common than we do in diversity. I appreciate very much the opportunity to attend with them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

SELECT COMMITTEE ON DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I beg leave to present the final report from the Select Committee on Developmental Services, entitled Inclusion and Opportunity: A New Path for Developmental Services in Ontario, and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mrs. Albanese presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Yes, I do, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank all the members of the committee who worked in a non-partisan way on the committee and focused on the task at hand with the goal of addressing the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities or dual diagnosis.

I also want to thank the legislative staff who worked with the committee and helped us write the report, and I want to thank everyone who participated, who made deputations or submissions, who offered opinions and shared with us their life stories. We hope that this report will make a difference in their lives.

I move adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SAFEGUARDING HEALTH CARE INTEGRITY ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 DE SAUVEGARDE DE L'INTÉGRITÉ DES SOINS DE SANTÉ

Mr. Hoskins moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 21, An Act to safeguard health care integrity by enacting the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, 2014 and by amending certain statutes with respect to the regulation of pharmacies and other matters concerning regulated health professions / Projet de loi 21, Loi visant à sauvegarder l'intégrité des soins de santé par l'édiction

de la Loi de 2014 sur le don de sang volontaire et la modification de certaines lois en ce qui concerne la réglementation des pharmacies et d'autres questions relatives aux professions de la santé réglementées.

1520

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Today, it's my pleasure to introduce the Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, 2014, that will, if passed, combine two previously introduced pieces of health legislation that died on the order paper in the spring.

The proposed legislation links together our government's actions to prohibit the compensation of blood and plasma donors in Ontario with the regulation of hospital pharmacies and other matters concerning the health professions regulatory system.

Very, very briefly, let me start with blood donation, then move to the regulation of hospital pharmacies. Every year, thousands of Ontarians voluntarily give blood and plasma to help others survive accidents, surgery or life-threatening conditions. Our position remains crystal clear: We stand firmly against payment for blood or plasma donations in Ontario.

The second part of the bill is our government's response to a very serious incident that occurred last year when 1,019 patients in Ontario received weaker doses of chemotherapy drugs than had been prescribed. Our proposed legislation, if passed, will amend the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act so as to allow the Ontario College of Pharmacists to inspect and license all hospital pharmacies operating in Ontario as a means to ensure that medication management and processing systems in hospital pharmacies are standardized.

At the same time, I'm introducing additional amendments to the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, and the Public Hospitals Act that will enhance communications among health systems partners, including health regulatory colleges, public hospitals and others, to strengthen oversight and better protect patients.

Speaker, I'm confident that all members can stand behind this proposed legislation.

LORETTO LADIES' COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS ACT, 2014

Mr. Colle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr1, An Act respecting The Loretto Ladies' Colleges and Schools.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS
AMENDMENT ACT
(GREATER PROTECTION FOR INTERNS
AND VULNERABLE WORKERS), 2014

LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES NORMES D'EMPLOI
(PROTECTION ACCRUE DES STAGIAIRES
ET DES TRAVAILLEURS VULNÉRABLES)

Ms. Sattler moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 22, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 / Projet de loi 22, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Before I move to my brief remarks about the bill, I want to recognize the efforts of Jonah Schein, former MPP for Davenport, who developed and introduced this legislation in the last Parliament.

The purpose of the bill is to increase protections for interns and vulnerable workers in Ontario and prevent illegal internships through amendments to the Employment Standards Act or ESA.

Currently, the ESA sets out certain conditions under which trainees, commonly known as interns, can be excluded from the definition of "employee" and exempted from the provisions of the act. The act also excludes secondary school students and work experience programs, and college or university students who are performing work as part of their program.

This bill extends some basic rights under the ESA to these three groups of individuals and also enhances protections for interns by requiring employers to post information about interns' rights in a conspicuous place in the workplace, review and provide written notice to interns about their rights, and submit a copy of the written notice to the Ministry of Labour, enabling the collection of data on the extent of internships in Ontario. Finally, the bill creates a system to allow anonymous and third party complaints.

I'm proud to introduce this bill and look forward to the debate.

PETITIONS

WORKPLACE INSURANCE

Mr. Bill Walker: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas, beginning on January 1, 2013, the WSIB was expanded to include groups of employers and principals who had previously been exempt from WSIB and had private insurance; and

"Whereas this new financial burden does nothing to improve worker safety and only drives up the cost of doing business in Ontario;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To repeal the statutory obligations created by Bill 119."

I support it and will send it to the Clerks' desk with page David.

LEGAL AID

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'm just looking for it, Speaker, one second—come around again.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Okay. The member for Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly which was provided to me by Mississauga Community Legal Services. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid clients within a community of nearly 800,000 population; and

"Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

"Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds ... and adopt a population-based model, factoring in population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner."

I am pleased to sign and support this petition and have page Matthew carry it for me.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas repeated cuts to health care funding under the present government are having a negative impact on the residents of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, including seniors, diabetics and those suffering from eye and cardiovascular conditions; and

"Whereas the heart rehabilitation program at the Seaway Valley Health Centre provided a valuable service for many residents; and

"Whereas it is in everyone's interests to help all Ontarians stay healthy and prevent the occurrence of acute and dangerous conditions, such as heart failure; and

"Whereas this interest is best served through adequate funding to programs that have proven their value;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To take all necessary action to restore the heart rehab program at the Seaway Valley Health Centre."

I agree with this, and will be signing it and passing it off to page Daniel.

CHILDHOOD APRAXIA OF SPEECH

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Eglinton—Lawrence.

Mr. Mike Colle: Sorry for the delay, Mr. Speaker. This petition was gathered by the good people of Mississauga. It reads as follows:

"Whereas childhood apraxia of speech is a rare neurological speech disorder that affects oral motor planning;

"Whereas an estimated 3% to 5% of the world's childhood population are diagnosed with childhood apraxia of speech;

"Whereas Ontario has excellent speech-language centres and programs that currently provide treatment for childhood apraxia of speech;

"Whereas children diagnosed in Canada with childhood apraxia of speech are eligible to receive the children's disability tax credit to assist with therapy costs;

"Whereas greater public awareness of speech disorders and the benefits of early intervention speech-language therapy are needed in the province of Ontario;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to join the United States of America in declaring May 14 as Apraxia Awareness Day" in Ontario.

I support this, and I affix my name to this very good petition.

CREDIT UNIONS

Mr. Robert Bailey: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario's economy and create jobs in three ways:

"—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

"—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

"—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries."

I agree with this petition, Mr. Speaker, and will affix my name to it as well.

CREDIT UNIONS

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario's economy and create jobs in three ways:

"—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

"—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

"—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries."

Mr. Speaker, I sign it and give it to page Matthew.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Winchester District Memorial Hospital provides essential health services to the residents of Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry and was awarded 'accreditation with exemplary standing'—the highest award by Accreditation Canada earlier this year; and

"Whereas the projected increase in Ontario's senior population demands that facilities have the resources and capacity required to accommodate increasing demand; and

"Whereas Ontarians cherish access to high-quality ... health care; and

"Whereas the recent closure of 14 beds at the WDMH and the loss of over" seven "full-time skilled staff positions at a time when Ontario has experienced unemployment above the national average for over seven consecutive years are the result of ongoing silent funding cuts that are threatening our cherished health care system;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately reinstate adequate funding levels for the Winchester District Memorial Hospital that would

allow the reopening of local beds and the rehiring of local qualified front-line health staff.”

I agree with that and will be passing it on to page Ethan.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further petitions? Last call for petitions.

Orders of the day.

Hon. Michael Chan: I move adjournment of the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister moves adjournment of the House. Do we agree? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This House stands adjourned until 10:30 tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1534.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiles, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Cimino, Joe (NDP)	Sudbury	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Delancy, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	

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Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Emie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton–Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brook	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakubski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

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Cindy Forster, Michael Harris
Randy Hillier, Sophie Kiwala
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife
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Harinder Malhi, Cristina Martins
Jim McDonell, Randy Pettapiece
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Bob Delaney, Jack MacLaren
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadi
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Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

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Chris Ballard, Toby Barrett
Garfield Dunlop, Eleanor McMahon
Laurie Scott, Jagmeet Singh
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Vacant
Robert Bailey, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Jennifer K. French, Monte Kwinter
Amrit Mangat, Kathryn McGarry
Indira Naidoo-Harris, Daiene Vernile
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Vacant
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon
Christine Elliott, France Gélinas
Marie-France Lalonde, Amrit Mangat
Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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of Ontario**

First Session, 41st Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

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Wednesday 23 July 2014

Mercredi 23 juillet 2014



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 23 July 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 23 juillet 2014

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Christine Elliott: I'd like to introduce and welcome three representatives from the Canadian Sikh Association who are here with us today for a reception: Manohar Singh Bal, Sukhdev Singh Gill and Abnash Kaur Kang. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Reza Moridi: It's a great pleasure to introduce Neville Britto and Sanjey Jegathesan, and also Gazal Amin. These are the interns from my office. Please join me in welcoming these young people.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I have the honour of introducing a couple of young men today. Domenic Bitondo, whom many of you know, is an intern at LCSB—he's from my riding of Etobicoke Centre, an organizer of youth in the riding—and his brother Mathew Bitondo. Welcome.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Good morning. It's my honour to introduce my EA from the Cambridge riding, Cassandra McKenna, who's my executive assistant.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I have the honour of welcoming here to Queen's Park my husband, Germinio Pio Politi, and his mother, Ada Politi, who is visiting here from Italy. Benvenuti.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: I would like to welcome members of the Canadian Sikh Association to Queen's Park today. We have with us Mr. Pritpal Singh Chatha, Mr. Gurmail Singh Nirman, Mrs. Amrit Kaur Gill and Jenny Gill, who will be joining us later.

The CSA will be hosting a reception in room 230 today from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. and from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. for all MPPs. Everyone is encouraged to drop by and meet the members of this group.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I'd like to introduce my new LA—I'm delighted to have her here—Raly Chakarova. She was also my campaign manager for the nomination contest. Welcome, Raly.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'm pleased to introduce Evan Walman; I've known his father for many, many years. He's an intern with the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. Welcome, Evan.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'd like to introduce two interns from my office at the Ministry of Labour, Khawla Nakua and Alex McKeen.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'd like to welcome Allison Williams from the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance; Alastair Woods, Anna Goldfinch and Kaley Kennedy from CFS-Ontario; Najiba Sardar and Sandy Hudson from U of T student council; Josh Mandryk from Students Against Unpaid Internship Scams; and labour lawyer Andrew Langille, who will be joining us shortly, and who have come to Queen's Park today for my press conference this morning.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. Today your budget bill comes up for third reading, but Premier there is a giant loophole, one that you had a chance to close yesterday at committee but chose not to: the Trillium Trust Act, which will put proceeds from government assets sales, first, into general revenues, not directly into the trust. There's no guarantee that any money will ever make it to the trust and not be used just to offset your deficit. Once you sell an asset, only you, without this Legislature ever knowing, gets to decide whether that money is "qualified" to go into the trust, and if so, how much will actually ever make it into the trust.

We brought amendments that would increase the transparency and reporting of asset sales. Premier, why did your government vote against the amendments for openness and transparency?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Finance is going to want to talk about the technicalities of the Trillium Trust, but let me just say this: We are committed, and have been committed from the time that we introduced the plan—and in fact before—to building transportation infrastructure, including transit. We have committed to creating trust funds so that the people of Ontario will know how much money is going into transit and transportation infrastructure building, and how that money is being spent. We've committed \$29 billion: \$15 billion for the greater Toronto and Hamilton area and \$14 billion for outside of the greater Toronto and Hamilton area.

I am pleased that the member opposite is showing an interest in building transit. I hope that means that maybe he'll support the budget.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Sadly, Premier, your handling of the gas plant money gave us one billion reasons not to take your word for it.

Let's run through this again: First, you sell an asset, but only you decide, with criteria unknown to anybody else, whether that asset is qualified to go into the trust. Then, according to the act, you "may" require, not "must" require, a portion of the proceeds, not all of the proceeds, to go into the trust. There is nothing to stop you from simply diverting that money into reducing your deficit, and we'll never know about it. That's why we asked for an amendment that has the Auditor General identify how the money from the sale of assets is distributed. Premier, why did you instruct your committee to vote against our transparency?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: It's pretty rich to hear a member from the opposition talk about transparency, especially when they sold the 407 for pennies, without any revelation.

In our budget, we have a chapter dedicated to transparency and accountability, and we'll continue to do exactly what's necessary to advise the public of what it is that we're doing. We've already stated that any sale of assets—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Too much noise on all sides.

Please finish.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, come to order.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, we will continue to provide that openness and transparency in the work that we do. We have made it clear that whatever is being reviewed and assessed will be made public. We've already dedicated—and we've said that we will dedicate—all those to the Trillium Trust to be used specifically for transportation and infrastructure. We'll continue to do what's in the best interests of the public and the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Premier, yesterday your members voted against the open and transparent sale of those very assets. Look, let's be clear: We're not against the sale of assets, but we're against using one-time money to pay for your operating expenses.

Yesterday, the Liberals told the committee that bringing in the Auditor General was "redundant." This is the same Auditor General's office that discovered and revealed to this Legislature the Liberals' abuse of another file: the debt retirement charge. We learned that back in 2004, \$4 billion more was added to the debt without being disclosed until 2012, a full eight years later—and we're still paying for that today. That money went straight into general revenue to artificially lower your deficit. Is that what you're going to do with the Trillium Trust fund? Is that why you voted against transparency?

1040

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, the debt retirement charge was a product of that party. They left us a legacy of billions and billions of dollars because of an electricity scheme that went awry, that the public has had to pay for—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I've said it a second time now, and that is, the noise is coming from all sides while the answer's being given and the question's being put. I will now move to warnings direct, and then after that it's naming.

Please finish.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, as a result of those mistakes, the very issues the member's speaking about, we have made corrections and we're continuing to do. We have put in place in this budget accountability measures. We're making it more transparent. Each of these situations has different circumstances by each transaction. There are different types of assets that are involved in this type of accounting treatment—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timmins—James Bay is warned.

Hon. Charles Sousa: So we will disclose and indicate exactly what we're doing. The member opposite and his party did not do that, Mr. Speaker. We are the ones who imposed those transparency measures. We're the ones who are being held accountable. The C. D. Howe Institute and others have indicated the integrity—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Be seated, please.

New question.

PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Speaker, my question is to the Premier. With troublesome economic indicators on the horizon, such as the negative outlook by credit rating agencies and upcoming labour negotiations under the cloud of a \$12-billion deficit, could the Premier tell us which is her priority: Avoiding labour strikes at all costs or meeting her deficit reduction targets?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The reality of governing is that there are complexities that mean that it's not either/or, Mr. Speaker. You don't choose between making sure we have an excellent education system or that we have good working partnerships with the people who are in our schools: the teachers, the support staff, the administrators with the school boards. We don't choose between that and making sure we meet our fiscal targets; we have to do both. Our plan lays out our path to do exactly that, to do both of those things and to do them in a balanced way.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I lack the Premier's confidence in her balancing skills. It's clear, with the Metrolinx 8.5% wage hike precedent, that further negotiations with teachers and doctors this fall will be hampered, probably

compromised, similar to a Frito-Lay commercial: "If I give one to you, I have to give one to everyone else." It's clear that they can't meet their spending targets while increasing—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is warned.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod:—compensation. They like to talk about net zeros over there, but I ask the Premier: What does net zero compensation actually mean to her? Is it higher pay with fewer workers? Is it higher pay with fewer benefits? Is it higher pay with less services, or will the Premier just admit that it really is just a higher pay that Ontarians are going to have to pay for because it will need a higher deficit, with no real, clear spending priorities or reductions priorities in place.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, there are some fundamental differences that underlie the question that the leader of the—the leader?—the member of the opposition—

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Sorry about that.

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Who knows?—that the member opposite is asking, Mr. Speaker. One of those fundamental differences between us and them is this: We believe in the collective bargaining process. We believe that it should be respected, and we believe that it is the best way for the agreements to be put in place. So that collective bargaining process will be honoured by us.

Having said that, we have been very clear that there is no new money for those settlements. There's no new money for benefits, salaries or wages. So those collective bargaining processes will take place within the funding that is in place, as they did in the Metrolinx situation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: What the Premier fails to mention is that there are always consequences to these higher pay increases. If the government, through Metrolinx, can give an 8.5% wage hike to workers while talking about "net zeros," it means either raising fees on riders or cutting from somewhere else in their budget, possibly from other services, or, finally, that the deficit will increase. Similarly, with teacher contract negotiations due this fall, a 2% increase for elementary teachers will either come with a cut elsewhere in education, bigger class sizes and/or fewer teachers or, again, the deficit will increase.

Given the Liberal priority is waving the white flag on wage freezes, will the Premier admit she is not interested at all in meeting her deficit reduction targets and Ontarians are going to be paying higher taxes as a result of it?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, that's just not true. I am very interested in meeting our deficit targets, Mr. Speaker, and we will do that.

The priority of the party opposite is to enter into conflict with organized labour. That is a starting point for them. That's a fundamental belief, that that is a good way

to govern. We saw it when they were in office previous to 2003. We saw it during their campaign. They believe that having disruptive, conflicted relationships with the people who deliver health care and education and the services that people need in this province—they believe that that is the way to go.

We don't believe that, Mr. Speaker. We believe that transforming systems, the work that has been done in health care to provide for better and different delivery of service—that is the focus of our government. Those kind of transformations, as well as continuing to have good working relationships with the people who deliver those essential services in Ontario.

FISCAL REVIEW

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. For weeks, the Premier has refused to answer questions about her asset sales and her cuts to public services. So far, the Premier has also refused to allow an independent review of her fiscal plan, the very same independent review that she supported in 2004 and since, Speaker. She's choosing to ignore the fact that only in election years can the auditor review the government's estimates, assumptions and projections, and report to the public on whether the fiscal plan is reasonable or whether it is not. Will the Premier tell us why she believes every election budget needs independent oversight except her own?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I've answered every one of the questions that the leader of the third party has put to me, and I will say again that we were on track to have that review of our budget. The NDP in particular decided that they did not support the budget and plunged us into an election, Mr. Speaker. That was the choice of the third party and the opposition. So we went into an election.

We brought the plan that we had introduced at the beginning of May in our budget. We have reintroduced that budget. The Auditor General, as we speak, is looking at the finances of this province, and her report will be tabled in the fall.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I will make mention of this only once, as a sidebar to my other comment about warning somebody: The debate that goes on at the back between questions will stop. If it doesn't, you'll be warned. And you can point your finger all you want; you'll be included.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And I advise the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek to pay attention this way and not to the person invoking you.

Next, please.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the Premier is remarkably adamant that she will stand in the way of fiscal transparency and actually prevent an independent review of the fiscal plan by the Auditor General. Now that she's in charge, she sees no need for a public report by the auditor on this year's election budget.

If the Premier won't allow a public review, Speaker, will she at least tell the House whether the Auditor General has been privately consulted about any of the details in her fiscal plan?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the leader of the third party is remarkably adamant, and was remarkably adamant, that she was going to stand in the way of a budget that would put money into eliminating wait-lists for developmental services, would put more money into the hands of personal support workers, would put more money into the hands of municipalities for housing.

What I'm adamant about is that we do all of those things, that we actually make those investments that are necessary, including in transit and transportation, which the leader of the third party has also been adamant that she will stand in the way of.

Our plan has been laid out for the people of Ontario, Mr. Speaker. We were on schedule to have a pre-election audit. The opposition and the third party decided that we would have an election. The Auditor General is writing her report, and our plan is open and clear for everyone in the province to see.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, families have a right to know whether their government is making prudent and reasonable assumptions about the province's future state of affairs. That is pretty basic stuff. That's pretty basic when it comes to transparency and accountability. They have a right to know, Speaker, because the services that they rely on are at stake, services like public transit.

Will the Premier confirm that the Ministry of Finance is working with the Auditor General to address concerns surrounding the treatment of gas tax revenues for transit?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, all of our ministries work with the Auditor General as she makes inquiries and asks questions. The Ministry of Finance is absolutely no exception.

The fiscal plan that we put forward is the fiscal plan that the NDP ran on. It was the foundation of their platform. What I believe is happening right now is that the leader of the third party is looking for any reason she can find, she's grasping at any straw to justify why she will not support a budget that will put more money into the hands of the people who are most vulnerable in this province. She is looking for a reason not to vote for the budget that will put money into the hands of personal support workers who are among our lowest-paid workers and our most valued in terms of transformation of the health care system. She's looking for an excuse not to support a budget that will put \$810 million into developmental services—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

FISCAL REVIEW

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. The need for an independent review by the auditor is becoming more and more clear every time the Premier tries to brush off our concerns. If there are any discussions going on between this government and the auditor about the numbers and how those numbers shape up, it is the responsibility of the Premier to be open and frank with the public.

I remember this Premier used to talk about that all the time, Speaker. It seems that she forgot that that was one of her fundamental beliefs in the past.

Will the Premier inform this House whether the Auditor General has contacted or been contacted by the Ministry of Finance concerning the accounting methods being used for transit funding, and if so, when will the public be told about the auditor's concerns?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Just to the question on the gas tax, the two cents on the gas tax that is dedicated to transit across the province—it's about \$320 million a year. That is dedicated funding that goes to municipalities according to ridership and population. That formula has been in place for a number of years and it remains in place. Actually, I don't understand the concern on the part of the leader of the third party about this, because we are committed to keeping that gas tax funding in place.

If she is so concerned about our fiscal plan, she maybe should go back and reread page 2 of her own platform. What that said was, "We will balance Ontario's books by 2017-18 with significantly more fiscal space than the Liberal plan." Then, it goes on to say, "Our plan will provide an additional fiscal cushion of over \$700 million annually." Mr. Speaker, they based their plan on our plan and then they went further. They said—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, every time the Premier refuses to answer a straightforward question, she raises even more doubts about the prudence of the assumptions behind her austerity budget. That is the bottom line, because if the actual budget truly reflects the story that the government tells, then the Premier should be welcoming the auditor's oversight with open arms. It begs the question, what reason could possibly be there to explain why the Premier is so determined to avoid public review of the numbers behind her fiscal plan?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I do welcome the Auditor General's questions. I welcome her scrutiny at any point, in any one of our ministries. I believe that the Auditor General's work is extremely important to the functioning of government and the improvement of government and its delivery of services. So I welcome the scrutiny of the Auditor General.

The fact is that Standard and Poor's just this week has said that "Ontario's financial management is strong, in our view. The level of transparency and disclosure in its financial statements is high: notes and schedules provide detailed information about core government, agencies

and boards, and business enterprises. The independent Auditor General audits the province's financial statements." That's an ongoing process, Mr. Speaker.

The Auditor General's report will be tabled in the fall. As I say, I welcome that scrutiny.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Yesterday the Premier said that she actually doesn't think that Dalton McGuinty's transparency and accountability measures are too good for her own government. That's a relief. But it also means that the Premier needs to stop dragging her heels on an independent review. The former Premier ensured his fiscal plans received independent oversight in election years, even in 2011, when the auditor raised serious doubts about the government's assumptions. Will the Premier simply follow her mentor's lead and request an independent review of her fiscal plan by the Auditor General to be made public before the end of this year?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the report of the Auditor General will be tabled in the fall.

The leader of the third party made a comment earlier about what I used to or didn't used to talk about. Here's what the NDP used to talk about. The NDP used to talk about issues like poverty, so increasing the child benefit would have been something that they would have supported in the past. They used to talk about the need for increases in social assistance benefits, so they would have supported a budget, conceivably, that included those increases, as our budget does. They used to talk about the need for a systemic approach to dealing with developmental services, so they would have supported a budget that included \$810 million for developmental services. They used to talk, just as recently as in the election campaign, about the need for expansion of student nutrition programs, so you would have thought they would have supported a budget that included \$20 million for that expansion.

The leader of the third party is looking for any reason not to support our budget—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

New question.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Ms. Christine Elliott: My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, as you know, Ornge air ambulance has been charged with 17 offences under the Canada Labour Code. These charges are as a result of the May 31, 2013, crash that claimed the lives of four dedicated Ornge employees, which occurred under your government's watch after appointing new leadership.

Minister, the documents show that the pilot of the flight was "without adequate training in the operation of that specific aircraft" and that Ornge failed to provide the pilots with "a means to enable them to maintain visual reference while operating at night," even with repeated warnings dating back to September 2012. As a result,

Ornge is now being charged with failure to ensure employee safety.

Minister, there are still clearly systemic problems at Ornge that your government has failed to correct. What are you going to do to make sure that Ornge employees and their patients are travelling safely on Ornge aircraft?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I know the member opposite appreciates, because there is a process under way that involves the potential of or the real issue of court action, that it would be inappropriate for me to speak about those details. But I am happy, and in fact I'm very proud, to speak of the progress that's been made by Ornge over the past number of years on a whole set of issues.

I want to give my commitment to the member opposite that we have been and we are and we will continue to work on virtually all of the recommendations that have been put forward by the various entities in terms of continuing to improve the performance of Ornge. We need to remember those hard-working individuals who perform such a vital function every single day.

Whether it's on issues concerning governance of Ornge, we've put steps into place for increasing government oversight; we have a very strong board in place which has made exceptional progress over the last number of years that I'm happy to speak to in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Christine Elliott: I would say to the minister that this is a very serious issue. Four people have died, and now Ornge is facing some very serious charges, so clearly whatever changes you have made haven't worked. We need to make sure that these people are going to be kept safe.

Despite opposition inquiries and a committee investigation into Ornge, the previous Minister of Health insisted to this House on numerous occasions that everything was fine. In fact, on April 19, 2013, less than two months before the crash, the minister stated that "Ornge is a much, much stronger organization now: new leadership, new protocols" and so on. However, these protocols clearly failed to protect Ornge employees and their patients.

1100

Major changes need to be made at Ornge to make sure that no more lives are lost. In fact, even a few weeks ago, there was a potential incident involving a near miss near Ottawa. Minister, can you tell us specifically what you are prepared to do to ensure that Ornge employees and their patients are travelling safely?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, I was, as were all members of this Legislature, absolutely devastated to hear of that tragedy just over one year ago, when two pilots and two paramedics regrettably lost their lives in that tragic incident. To this day, our hearts and our thoughts go out to the families, the friends and the colleagues of those four individuals who unfortunately perished.

I again want to indicate to the member opposite, and I know this is an issue which is important to her as well, that we take the recommendations before us very, very seriously. We take these charges very seriously as well, as does Ornge and their leadership.

I have to also point out that before this tragic incident, as well as subsequent to that, we have been working very closely with Transport Canada on a number of measures not just to improve patient safety and the overall performance of Ornge, but particularly, as was demonstrated by this case, to ensure the safety of the workers at Ornge.

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Minister of Labour. Yesterday, I introduced a private member's bill, the Greater Protection for Interns and Vulnerable Workers Act, that was first introduced by my former colleague Jonah Schein.

I want to make it clear that this bill goes significantly beyond the rather weak measures included in your Bill 18. For example, one provision of my bill requires that employers notify the Minister of Labour when they bring in interns, and clearly spell out expectations, such as job description and hours of work.

There is no reason for the continued exploitation of unpaid interns in this province, so I ask the minister, will this government be supporting my bill?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to rise on this important issue, and I thank the member for her question.

Let me be very, very clear right from the start. It doesn't matter what your job title is, it doesn't matter what your position is: If you perform work for somebody in the province of Ontario, you're covered by the Employment Standards Act and you deserve to be paid. There's a very narrow exemption for those people who are enrolled in educational institutions, co-op students or the self-employed or trainees. But certainly, if you're performing work for somebody in this province, you deserve to be paid.

We have proactive enforcement on this issue. We have been out to a number of employers. We have talked to the post-secondary institutions. We're making sure the people in the province of Ontario understand that we are very, very serious about this issue, that we're going to continue the inspections and that we are going to ensure, as I said from the start, that if you work in Ontario, you get paid in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: In response to the exemptions, I wanted to point out that another measure in my bill would bring in co-op students, interns and other trainees who are currently exempted under the Employment Standards Act so that they would be entitled to some basic workplace protections. Too many workers are exempted from the Employment Standards Act, and this provision takes a small step to close those loopholes.

My bill is supported by students and labour law experts. So I ask again, will this government support my bill and end the exploitation of unpaid interns in Ontario?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Speaker, the bill will make its way through the House like every other private member's bill, but let me tell you, in the last term of government, before that party caused the election, Bill 146 was before this House, which would have extended coverage to co-op students. We've reintroduced that now as Bill 18, so it's back on the books again.

I want to tell you, though, that on average the Ministry of Labour receives just over 18,000 employment claims each year. We've got 150 employment standards officers who are carrying out proactive inspections, and they investigate claims on all types of violations, including internships.

I want to also tell the people out there who are watching on TV and the people who are in the chamber that if they have a concern with internships, there is a hotline: 1-800-531-5551. Call that number and we'll investigate.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms. Daiene Vernile: This question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, the Select Committee on Developmental Services tabled its final report to the House yesterday. This committee's job is to tell us about the developmental services system and the coordination of supports for people in our province with developmental disabilities.

I have met with many of these families in my riding of Kitchener Centre and I can tell you that we were very pleased to learn that this committee was re-struck and that the House has now received its very important recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, there are many people who are very interested in hearing from the minister on her views of the committee and its work. Could she please share that with us?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: To the member for Kitchener Centre, thank you for that question. First of all, I would like to acknowledge the excellent work by the members from all sides of this House on the Select Committee on Developmental Services. I think it's very clear that when we put partisan ideology aside and we work together in the public interest, we can come up with some very, very strong recommendations. That is exactly what this committee has done.

Also, of course, I'd like to thank all the people who made submissions, both in person and written submissions. They were very thoughtful, and clearly there is a sense of urgency in the community that we need to address the concerns.

Many of the issues that were raised in the report were issues of which my ministry was very well aware. In fact, my predecessor, the Honourable Ted McMeekin, did put a lot of pieces in place to address these issues, including, of course, the \$810 million over the next—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you, Minister. It's very encouraging to hear that you and your officials welcome this report and that the recommendations are being considered.

In the budget which was tabled last week, you mention this unprecedented infusion of \$810 million for developmental services, and that by 2016-17 these new funds are going to climb to over \$2 billion for developmental services.

Money alone is not enough to deal with the urgent needs and challenges that the developmentally disabled and their families have to deal with every day. Along with the funding, could the minister please inform this House of the actions that she is taking to continue the work of strengthening developmental services in Ontario?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Thank you, again, to the member for the question. Of course, as she has explained, certainly the \$810 million over three years is not the whole story. Investments are important, but our government understands that addressing the significant issues facing families is not just about more funding.

That's why I'm very pleased to announce that we will be convening a housing task force in the very near future to recommend innovative housing solutions for a broader set of residential options for people with developmental disabilities. We are also talking with staff at Developmental Services Ontario about some of the practices that they have introduced that are particularly positive.

I think it's worth recognizing that we do have some 18,000 adults receiving residential supports at this point in time here in Ontario and there are more than 15,000 who receive direct funding through the Passport Program. So while we have serious issues, we also need to find our best practices in this regard.

TAXATION

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. Minister, Ontario used to be "Yours to Discover," but that won't be the case for much longer with your government's decision to increase the province's aviation fuel tax by 148%.

The National Airlines Council of Canada projects that this tax increase will drive away 400,000 more air travellers and greatly impact hotels, restaurants, travel agents and tour operators, among others who support this industry. Minister, do you have any idea how many jobs that will cost those working in the tourism industry?

Hon. Michael Coteau: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I think the member opposite also recognizes that in order to promote tourism, economic growth and the vitality of our province, we must make those investments in infrastructure, investments in things that will make us competitive. They want to make certain that we have an air-rail link from Union Station to the airport. They want to make certain that we eliminate gridlock, which is costing \$6 billion annually. They want

to make certain that when we attract tourists they have the availability and the ability to see the province in all its glory. In so doing, we are raising aviation tax by one penny per litre. That is modest in comparison to the lion's share of taxes and services and fees that are being charged by the federal government. I would recommend the member opposite talk to Lisa Raitt and the federal government to reduce their taxes.

1110

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Minister, I guess the shuffle to Buffalo will just increase.

In 2012, British Columbia, as part of its jobs plan, and despite facing budget constraints, actually decided to eliminate its fuel tax on international flights to attract new services and create new jobs. And it has worked. They have 22 airlines adding new flights out of Vancouver while injecting millions into the BC economy. Each new daily international flight creates between 150 and 200 new jobs, and another 400 jobs are created in hotels, restaurants and other businesses. The proof is in the numbers.

Your government's proposed tax increase will threaten at least 3,000 jobs. Will you commit today to stop this needless tax hike until you study the full implication that the job losses will have on the tourism industry? Do that today, Minister.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, we have a comparison between Ontario and the Ontario airports—the major one being, of course, Pearson international airport—compared to the other international airports around the world, and Ontario continues to be more competitive than they are. We will continue to do so.

This hasn't changed since 1992, but when you look at the tax that we're talking about—2.7 cents—versus what is being paid in London, at 69 cents, or Paris, at 54 cents, or New York, at—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop, please.

The member from Nepean—Carleton is warned.

Finish, please.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Compared against Chicago and even other provinces, like Manitoba. Ontario will still be more competitive than they are.

But, again, the member opposite talks about balancing the budget, making certain that we take the necessary steps to increase our revenue where possible to invest in those things that matter. That is the balanced approach that we are taking.

The member opposite should also—again, talk to your federal cousins, who are saying to increase our revenues and take advantage of those things that we can to improve our bottom line. That's exactly what we are doing. Again, talk to your cousins and get them to—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member is taking a tightrope walk.

New question.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question to the Minister of Education: Under the Education Act, the minister is required to “ensure that all exceptional children in Ontario have available to them ... appropriate special education programs and special education services.” But parents of kids who require special education still find themselves fighting every day to get supports their children need. Too often, despite the best efforts of staff, our education system fails to provide appropriate assistance that these children require. Will the minister tell parents why this government is failing to ensure all schools can meet the special education needs of Ontario students?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Of course we are committed to making sure that special-needs students all over the province are receiving special education services. In fact, as the member has noted, boards are actually required to provide special education services for those who are identified.

It might be interesting to note, Speaker, that actually boards go beyond in their provision of special education services, actually go beyond those who have been formally identified and provide special education services for many students who haven't been formally identified, simply because the teacher and the principal have identified a need. In fact, our records show that about a third of the students in the province who are receiving special education supports are doing so without formal identification because the principal recognizes the need.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, the ministry has a legal obligation to ensure that special education programs and services are available to students when and where they need them. Parents shouldn't have to fight just to get the services that they're legally entitled to. And, in spite of what the minister says, far too many parents continue to be told that their local school boards just don't have the resources to provide the special education supports their children need. Will the minister tell the House exactly how many schools are currently not able to meet their legal obligations to provide these special services?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm actually very pleased to report to the Legislature that if you look at our special education funding, it has actually increased by \$2.7 billion—it's up to \$2.7 billion this year. That is an increase of \$1 billion over what it was in 2002. Since our government came into office, we've had an increase of 67% in the amount of funding that we provide to school boards for special education.

Obviously, it is up to the local school boards to allocate that money to provide for needs but, as I have noted here, in a time when enrolment is declining, we have increased the funding for special education by 67%, by over \$1 billion.

BLOOD DONATION

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Anybody here who remembers the tainted blood crisis of the 1980s understands the profound importance of maintaining the integrity of Canada's blood system. As a nurse and as a parent, I can really relate to this. I recall the fear of getting a letter advising that our son's already fragile health was at risk because he may have received tainted blood while hospitalized in the 1980s. Fortunately, extensive testing revealed that he did not suffer consequences of that life-saving blood transfusion.

The principle of voluntary donation is one of the pillars of that system, but is being threatened in Ontario by the possibility of plasma collection sites that would pay people for their plasma. Citizens in my riding of Cambridge are also concerned about this. Could the minister, through you, Speaker, inform this House of what steps he's undertaking to protect the integrity of Ontario's blood system?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I want to thank the member from Cambridge for this timely and important question. I was pleased yesterday to stand up in this House and introduce the Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act for its first reading. This proposed legislation actually combines two bills that our government brought forward this past spring, one of which directly addresses the member's concerns. These concerns have been echoed for some time by health care professionals and organizations, patient advocates and ordinary Ontarians who are opposed to private, for-profit plasma collection. I agree, and our government agrees. That's why I was proud to introduce this proposed legislation.

I urge all members of this House to stand together against the payment for blood or plasma donations in Ontario. This will build on steps that our government has already taken to protect the integrity of our public blood donation system.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you, Minister. As a nurse who has been asked about the safety of our blood supply by former patients, I'm pleased and relieved that the minister has reintroduced this bill, and I hope that all members will support its passage.

The gift of blood is the gift of life. I know we are all grateful to the thousands of Ontarians who voluntarily give blood and plasma every single year. Their donations help others to survive accidents and surgeries, as well as life-threatening conditions. I've seen many patients in hospitals, as well as our own son, recover due to the generosity of these selfless citizens.

Ontarians who need blood and plasma products can take comfort in the strength and safety of our blood supply today, but they also need to know that life-giving blood and plasma products will be available when they need them.

Could the minister tell this House whether this legislation, if passed, might negatively impact the availability of blood and plasma products in Ontario?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thanks again to the member from Cambridge. Our government takes the supply of blood, plasma and plasma-based products very, very seriously. This proposed legislation would not reduce that supply for Ontarians in any way. There's simply no need for a parallel private, for-profit blood system in Canada. The demand for plasma used in transfusions has actually been decreasing in Canada, and we are completely self-sufficient in this area.

For-profit clinics would likely sell the plasma they collect for a profit on the international market to manufacture plasma products for pharmaceutical use. There's no guarantee that this plasma would even come back to Ontario.

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For more than 15 years, our blood system has been ably managed by Canadian Blood Services, a public, not-for-profit organization. I remain confident in their ability to manage a national blood system that meets all of Ontarians' needs.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Members from all sides of this House understand the difficulties many families have in accessing support and services for their family members living with a developmental disability.

One family in Dufferin-Caledon recently had a terrible experience with the local developmental services office, or the DSO. This family has been looking after their child with a physical and developmental disability for over 30 years, but because the parents' own health is declining, they called the DSO to update them and ask for assistance. The reaction from the DSO was anything but helpful. They displayed an appalling lack of empathy to my constituent, going so far as to say they were lucky to receive any funding at all. Do you believe this is how DSO staff should be responding to families who have reached out to them for help?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Thank you to the member for the question. In general, obviously, in response to the story that we have just been told, I would be most distressed. My heart goes out to that family, to have received that kind of response to a genuine request for help.

I think we need to remember, however, that DSOs are very new in terms of their establishment by our government. They were established in 2011 for the very purpose of providing one window so that applications by families could be made in a consistent way, so that we could ensure that a single application was made and that there was consistency across the province in that way.

We are aware that there have been some growing pains. We want to renew an emphasis on customer service as we go forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Thank you, Minister, for your candour. I know you understand the challenges facing the sector and I believe you want to see improvements. But fundamental changes need to be made at the DSOs to improve their service. The Select Committee on Developmental Services made seven recommendations specifically related to improving the work of the DSOs. Not every recommendation involves spending more money, but all of them require leadership from you.

These recommendations can start making a difference immediately. Minister, will you end the wait, adopt the select committee's recommendations and improve customer service at DSO offices across Ontario?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Quite clearly, we put a plan in place, outlined in the budget, to invest some \$810 million over three years. This is going to have a dramatic impact on those needing developmental services. It will provide direct funding for some 21,000 people and support more than 4,200 people as they navigate key life transitions, such as going to post-secondary school or getting a job. It will provide support for approximately 1,400 people with urgent residential needs. It will promote community living partnerships through expanded host family and supported independent living programs.

This is our plan. This was introduced not only on May 1, but reintroduced. There's a chance at redemption for the opposition parties: to stand with us and vote for the budget.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. In late April, the government announced plans for a high-speed rail line that would run from Toronto to London. In Windsor, many of us wondered why we had been left out of the new plans since we had been included in earlier plans.

Well, a couple of weeks later the election was called, and the Liberal candidate in Windsor West, who was also a cabinet minister, suddenly promised that the province would expand high-speed rail to Windsor after all. Now, with the election over, the government seems to have forgotten its promise to the people of Windsor. Once again, the government talks only of a line from Toronto to London, not to Windsor. Mr. Speaker, I would like a yes or no answer. When the government says it will open a high-speed rail line within 10 years, does this line include Windsor?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to thank the member from Windsor for this question. I don't recall if this is the first opportunity I've had to respond to a question from this new member, but I do appreciate hearing about this issue that I know is very, very important to not only her community but also communities like London, Kitchener and Toronto, of course.

It's important to recognize that in order for us to accomplish achieving this kind of ambitious plan that we have for transit and transportation, we can only accomplish that if we have support for the budget that is before the House this week. The \$29 billion that are included for transportation and transit infrastructure are crucial to making sure that not only do we deal with high-speed rail for communities like Kitchener and London, and potentially for Windsor as well, but it's also important to make sure that we keep the province moving forward.

Part of that \$29 billion is roughly \$14 billion for communities that fall outside the GTHA. The ministry is in the process of working to complete the business case and launch the EA. I look forward to talking to this member and others about how we can move forward with our plan to benefit her community and all other communities across southwestern Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Windsor voters were promised high-speed rail by this government, not another study. It was right there in big letters on their candidates' billboards. But clearly the government has no intention of including Windsor in its 10-year high-speed rail plan. In fact, it's hard to believe the government is serious about high-speed rail at all. It is mentioned nowhere in the government's budget, and the government refuses to release the study that supposedly shows that it can open this line in less than 10 years from now at an unbelievable net cost of just \$500 million. Will the government finally admit that high-speed rail is nothing more than an empty election promise?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member from Windsor for that supplementary question. I don't want to be presumptuous, Speaker, and from my particular vantage point talk about what the people of Windsor may or may not have voted for, but my guess is that the people of Windsor, like people in London and Kitchener and Toronto and my riding of Vaughan—I'm pretty sure those people voted for the very thoughtful and ambitious plan that we have as a government, that is laid out in our platform and our budget, the \$29 billion for transit and transportation infrastructure.

It's also really important to recognize that the high-speed rail project—and this is a project that the Ministry of Transportation is working hard to finalize the business case for and then launch the EA and get on with that work. That project, over the next 10 years, will create tens of thousands of jobs and has the potential, especially if we have the co-operation and the hard work and the opportunity to work with members on all sides of the House, to help re-energize the entire southwestern Ontario economy. I call on that member to support our budget so we can get on with these very important projects.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M. Shafiq Qaadri: Ma question s'adresse à la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones, l'honorable Madeleine Meilleur.

Le 10 juillet dernier, le commissaire aux services en français a déposé son septième rapport annuel. Ce rapport est, en fait, historique puisque c'est le premier rapport du commissaire en tant qu'officier indépendant de l'Assemblée législative.

La ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones peut-elle partager la réponse du gouvernement à ce rapport?

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Je voudrais remercier le député d'Etobicoke-Nord pour sa question. Notre gouvernement est fier d'avoir introduit le projet de loi pour l'indépendance du commissaire en septembre dernier, et je veux remercier les deux partis de l'opposition qui l'ont soutenu, spécifiquement la députée de Nepean-Carleton et la députée de Nickel Belt.

Ce dernier rapport du commissaire contient quatre recommandations. Cette année encore, le commissaire soulève des enjeux importants pour les Franco-Ontariens, tels que l'immigration et l'accès à la justice. Nous allons examiner en détail chacune de ces recommandations, évaluer leur faisabilité et aller de l'avant pour améliorer la prestation des services pour notre communauté francophone.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Merci. Supplementary?

M. Shafiq Qaadri: Merci à la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones pour sa réponse et aussi pour son dévouement à la communauté francophone et francophile, comme moi-même, depuis plus de 10 ans déjà.

La ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones mentionne l'accès à la justice en français. Monsieur le Président, ma question est pour la procureure générale. Le commissaire aux services en français félicite le gouvernement pour les progrès accomplis dans plusieurs domaines, incluant celui de la justice. La procureure générale peut-elle nous donner un aperçu des progrès accomplis dans le domaine de la justice?

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L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Merci encore une fois pour la question. Comme vous le savez, notre gouvernement est très engagé à améliorer l'accès à la justice en français en Ontario. Le procureur qui m'a précédée a établi un comité consultatif de la magistrature et du barreau qui a émis des recommandations. Ces recommandations sont revues par le comité directeur pour étudier leurs applications. Le ministère a mis en place un Plan stratégique pour le développement des services en français. Chaque année, des intervenants et cadres supérieurs du ministère se réunissent pour établir les priorités pour les services en français.

Alors, notre plan stratégique a d'ailleurs reçu une mention honorable dans le rapport du commissaire Boileau.

Quant à la recommandation du commissaire, mon ministère étudie la faisabilité d'un projet pilote pour améliorer l'accès à la justice en français.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM FUNDING

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. The village of Burk's Falls in my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka is facing a serious challenge. Since your government ended the Connecting Link Program in 2013, they've had to take on the cost of repairs to the Armstrong Bridge that serves as a main artery through the village. The work needs to be done soon and it's estimated to cost well over a million dollars.

Area and seasonal residents rely on the route to access provincial Highway 520 that connects to the village of Magnetawan, Ceebebe Lake, Ahmic Lake and provincial Highway 124. The Armstrong Bridge is a connecting link in every sense of the term. Minister, what is being done by your government to support small municipalities like Burk's Falls which now face massive infrastructure costs with the ending of the connecting links program?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to thank the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka for that question. This is the first opportunity that I've had to hear specifically about this, let's call it, unique thing that's taking place in his riding in that particular community. I'm happy to offer the opportunity for the member opposite to have a longer conversation with me about the particular issues that are affecting this community.

I think it is also interesting to note that, as we've heard repeatedly from the party opposite since coming back to this Legislature post election, they feel very compelled that the most important thing for this government to do is to cut, to slash and to do everything we can to tear Ontario down; and yet from to time, including today, we hear members like this member opposite stand up and ask a question on behalf of their community that calls on us to actually make investments. I think it's interesting to see there's a bit of a discordant note on that side of the Legislature about what the most important thing is.

I am happy to talk to the member offline about what's taking place in this community, but this is why, fundamentally, it's so important for us to support the investments we want to make to build all of Ontario up.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: Again to the Minister of Transportation: The municipality has done their due diligence. Over the past year, they've met with regional MTO officials and have been seeking alternate avenues for funding. Burk's Falls's annual tax levy is under \$1 million, and they're already undertaking major upgrades in the municipal water system. They have to rebuild another bridge, the Yonge Street Bridge, and they have to rebuild their water tower in 2016.

Councillors are worried that the unexpected cost of looking after the Armstrong Bridge will bankrupt the village. My question, Minister: Will you work with Burk's Falls council to help them with the challenge of maintaining the Armstrong Bridge?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member opposite for the supplementary. As I said in my opening answer,

I'd be happy to work with that member and people in his community to do what we can. But most importantly, it's important to recognize that the budget we've introduced in this Legislature, the budget that we campaigned on which formed the basis of our election platform, makes permanent an infrastructure fund that will help alleviate the burden that many municipalities are facing.

I know that colleagues on this side of the House like the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs—and I probably messed up a little bit of that name—and also the minister responsible for infrastructure will work very hard to make sure that we can make investments in communities across the province.

Of course, I'd be happy to talk to this member about what's taking place in his community. But again, I want to say, Speaker, this is why it's important for us to have a plan moving forward that invests in communities across this province, and they should support our budget for that reason.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Minister of Health. I have a constituent, Mr. Richard Gauthier, who lives in Timmins, who suffers from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, but the only drug that he is able to take in order to give him quality of life and keep him out of the hospital is Xolair. The problem is that, at the time that he was prescribed this drug, it could only be applied and given in a clinic, and it happens to be that it's in the city of Toronto. He has been refused his travel grants. My question to you is, are you prepared to review this case in order to approve the travel grants for the treatment he was not able to get in the city of Timmins?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. I'd be happy to sit down with you, and also to review the case with my ministry officials to see what is the best approach to take in this particular case. I won't speak any more in terms of the details, but I certainly commit to working with you to see if we can find a resolution to it.

It is important to emphasize that cases such as these emphasize the importance of us having a drug program which is fair and equitable to all Ontarians, and that we continue to invest as we do. I think over \$4 billion annually is invested in our drug programs.

There are particular incidents that come up from time to time. I'm happy, as the minister responsible, to look into this case personally and just ensure that, in fact, it is meeting the criteria and being handled in a fair and equitable way.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Saved by a second.

Listen, I appreciate that the minister is willing to look into it, but I just want to be clear: Xolair is covered by the Trillium Drug Program. He in fact had to go after them in order to get it approved.

The issue is that it can only be given in these particular clinics that are not actually approved clinics by the province of Ontario. There is no such clinic available in Timmins; it's only in Toronto.

I appreciate that you're prepared to look at it, and I look forward to a resolution to this so that he can actually have his travel grants paid, because otherwise we would have to pay to keep this gentleman in a hospital at a much higher cost than the actual treatment would cost.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the additional details. We'll follow up directly.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Scarborough–Rouge River on a point of order.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Mr. Speaker, I hope you would allow my indulgence. I would like to recognize two of my guests who are in the west gallery. They are long-time residents of my riding of Scarborough–Rouge River, and very close friends. Mr. Joseph Sheon and his wife, Ying Sheon, are here to observe the proceedings of the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton on a point of order.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for your indulgence. I ask all members of the House to join me in welcoming dear friends of mine from the riding: Surjit Singh, as well as Jaswinder Singh Badesha, who forms one brother of three brothers who are very influential businesspeople in the community and great supporters of mine—Harjit Singh Badesha and Harpal Singh Badesha—as well as members of the Canadian Sikh Association. Thank you so much for welcoming them all today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities on a point of order.

Hon. Reza Moridi: Mr. Speaker, please join me in welcoming my fourth intern, Tanvir Janmohamed, sitting in the member's gallery over there.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: On a point of order, I'd ask all members to help me welcome my legislative assistant, Ms. Tanya Kuzman, and Mr. Nik Bulatovich, who is an exemplary young activist in Etobicoke–Lakeshore and a great volunteer.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm sure all of you will appreciate that absolutely none of those was a point of order, but we do welcome our guests all the time.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1139 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'm delighted to introduce some special guests from my riding of Newmarket–Aurora and

leaders in the creative community. We have Renee Hay, chairman of Arts Music Festivals York Region; from the Newmarket Jazz Festival, Deb Thompson, a board member, Sher St. Kitts, general manager, and George St. Kitts, the festival artistic director; and Erika Kerwin, Newmarket Arts Council board member. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I suspect that's going to be the new uniform of the Legislature.

Further introduction of guests?

It's time for members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

YORK REGION HOLSTEIN CLUB

Mrs. Julia Munro: Last week, I had the honour of attending the Twilight Dinner hosted by York Region Holstein Club, a club that has played an important role advocating for the dairy industry for the last 101 years and that acts as an ambassador. Over 300 people attended the Twilight Dinner to support the 30 dairy farms in York region, a testament to the vitality and economic significance of the industry in York region.

I would like to acknowledge the people who played a role in the success of the dinner. Bart Johnson and his son Greg hosted the dinner on their farm, Belridge Holsteins, a farm that has been in their family for three generations. I would also like to acknowledge the president of York Region Holstein Club, Dan O'Hara, for his hard work with the club. Lastly, I would like to congratulate the winner of the cattle judging contest, Brooke Thompson, who most accurately critiqued the cattle and scored closest to the professional judges' scores.

I would like to thank the York Region Holstein Club for their hard work in advocating for dairy farmers in Ontario, and I look forward to attending next year's and future Twilight Dinners.

CHILD PROTECTION

Mr. Paul Miller: Once again, I've tabled my "protecting child performers" private member's bill. It's now Bill 17 and is substantially the same as Bill 71, to which all parties agreed—that is, until the former House leaders decided to play silly, harmful political games with my efforts to expedite protection for child performers.

Child performers work legally in Ontario but have no legal protection. The government leaves their workplace protection to contract negotiations. Child safety at any level and in any form should never be the subject of negotiations. Our employment standards laws need to be updated immediately to enhance protection for this very vulnerable group of workers.

My bill comes before the House for second reading debate quite soon after the Legislature returns from the summer recess. I encourage all MPPs to act with their hearts, their minds and their basic humanity and concern for these vulnerable, very young workers. Let's stand to-

gether and expedite passage of Bill 17 to finally provide legal protection to all child performers.

CANADIAN SIKH ASSOCIATION

Ms. Harinder Malhi: It is commonly said that Sikh values are the same as Canadian values. The Sikh community has a long history here in Canada, including building a vibrant and recognizable community right here in Ontario.

Sikh Canadians share the same aspirations of success, the same hopes for happiness and the same ambition to build a better province that serves as a model of tolerance and multiculturalism.

One organization that embodies and actively promotes this within the Sikh community is the Canadian Sikh Association. Since 2009, the CSA has advocated for the rights of Sikhs right here in Ontario and in Canada while promoting civic engagement and championing issues of human rights and social justice. This organization has been a strong advocate for equality and multiculturalism, the promotion of gender equality, religious freedom and cross-cultural friendship.

As a newly elected member at Queen's Park, I am proud to work with them in ensuring equality for all people.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the CSA for their efforts that have paved the way for equality for all people, and for placing the ideals of religious freedom at the forefront of political dialogue here in Ontario.

Today, members of the Canadian Sikh Association are visiting Queen's Park. I encourage all MPPs to visit their reception this afternoon at 5 p.m. in room 230.

ONTERA

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Residents across northeastern Ontario and in my riding of Nipissing are speaking in one voice in opposition to the government's planned sale of Ontera, which will result in 67 workers losing their jobs, many in my home riding of Nipissing.

There is growing concern that this sale may, in fact, contravene federal competition rules. North Bay city council passed a motion last Monday directing the mayor's office to file a complaint with the federal Competition Bureau, as well as the CRTC, requesting an investigation. Their motion stated that the sale "will create a monopoly of telecommunications services in portions of northeastern Ontario," and "a lack of competition will have a long-term impact" on the level and cost of telecom services as well as on the development of northeastern Ontario. Nipissing-Timiskaming MP Jay Aspin has now also filed a formal complaint with the federal Competition Bureau.

The Auditor General has told you, and I have said repeatedly in this Legislature, that this sale won't save Ontario taxpayers any money, which was the impetus to put them for sale. In fact, according to the auditor, it will cost you and the taxpayers between \$50 million and \$70

million. So you're cutting jobs and driving up the deficit at the same time.

We're asking you, please do the right thing and halt this sale.

WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Yesterday I listened with great interest to the exchange made by two Liberal MPPs in question period about winter highway maintenance and what is being done by this government to improve winter highway safety.

This is a very important issue to people in my riding of Kenora-Rainy River, where last winter the conditions were so bad that we had a number of motor vehicle collisions, including a 14-transport pileup; treacherous roads; what seemed to be a record number of highway closures; and some highways that were virtually impassable until the snow melted. On many occasions, the region came to a standstill.

Living in the North, we aren't strangers to winter weather. We expect snow to fall and to have to exercise caution when driving during the winter months. That is reasonable. But what isn't reasonable are the conditions we were confronted with last winter. People in Kenora-Rainy River told me they have never seen a winter like that before and they're already worried about this upcoming winter. They're looking to this government to make changes now, in advance of next winter, so they can rest easy knowing they can safely travel our roads. They don't want to hear the compliments and accolades exchanged in question period yesterday or a regurgitation of the ineffective assurances they heard last winter.

I'm calling on this government to uphold the will of this Legislature and immediately strike an all-party committee to evaluate the root causes of the poor maintenance we received and to develop a comprehensive solution so that we never have to endure another treacherous winter like the one we just did.

NEWMARKET JAZZ FESTIVAL

Mr. Chris Ballard: The August long weekend will soon be upon us and with it the desire of many families and music lovers to find something unique to do. With that in mind, I invite everyone to this year's Newmarket Jazz+ Festival to enjoy great music, fantastic family events and the ambience, shopping and dining experience of Newmarket's quaint, heritage downtown.

The Newmarket Jazz Festival runs August 1 to 4. Featured musicians include Newmarket's Justin Hines, Aurora's Stacey Kaniuk, Jackie and Kim Richardson, George Olliver, the Sultans of String, Juice, Rob Tardik, and George and Alex St. Kitts, to name just a few.

Enjoy the long weekend at our Riverwalk Commons, with music of all styles, visual artists, thespians, circus entertainers, the creative kids' zone, film screenings, music workshops and much more.

Speaker, this is just a small taste of what will be happening August 1 to 4 in Newmarket. All of this for \$5; children under 12 are free.

Interjection: Five bucks?

Mr. Chris Ballard: Five bucks, exactly.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to highlight a volunteer-led organization in my riding of Newmarket that gives back so magnificently to the community.

I'm proud to live in a province where so many volunteers in all areas give freely of their time and talent to make our towns and cities great places to live.

On the long weekend, the Newmarket Jazz Festival awaits with something for everyone.

1510

PROVINCIAL ELECTION

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I rise today to share some serious concerns residents in Dufferin–Caledon have regarding their ability to vote in last month's provincial election. As many of you know, Elections Ontario set up a website called Where Do I Vote?, which was designed to direct voters to their respective polling locations on June 12. The problem is that, in the case of voters in Dufferin–Caledon, the website was sending people to the wrong polling locations, and even in some cases to the wrong riding.

Indeed, a reporter at one of our local papers used the site to find the voting location nearest to the newspaper's office in Caledon and was directed to vote in Simcoe–Grey. In addition, my campaign received numerous complaints from voters who were frustrated because they had been directed by Elections Ontario's website to the wrong areas and were unsure where they were supposed to vote.

This was obviously a serious problem. It appears that the problem was due to the fact that Canada Post changed a number of postal codes in rural Dufferin–Caledon. However, this change started to take place almost two years ago, and even earlier in Caledon.

Voters expect and deserve to have upfront and clear information from Elections Ontario. Mistakes like this are totally unacceptable when it comes to something as sacred as a citizen's right to vote.

I will be writing the Chief Electoral Officer on the matter, and I'm eager to hear the explanation behind the error, as well as what is being done to make sure that it doesn't happen again. I know many Dufferin–Caledon voters are looking for answers, and I am hopeful that we will receive them.

HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Recently in my unique riding of Cambridge, the city held a public meeting to unveil its plans to adaptively reuse a historically significant building. Originally the Galt post office, the beautiful two-and-a-half-storey stone building was designed by Thomas Fuller and constructed in 1885.

As chief Dominion architect, Fuller helped in the design of every major federal building from 1881 to 1896. The post office was designated under the Ontario Heritage Act and was named as a national historic site in 1982.

Empty for several years, its future was in jeopardy until the city bought it to repurpose it into a modern community library and resource centre, including a teen-managed space, a reading area, an outdoor terrace overlooking the Grand River, a restaurant, a family discovery centre, digital learning labs and a workshop. Architects proposed a conceptual design featuring glassed additions with panoramic views of the city and a glass addition that would cantilever over the Grand River.

The greenest building is the one that's already standing. Almost 30% of our landfill sites are made up of demolished building materials. The city of Cambridge has shown leadership in protecting our valuable heritage assets in Ontario by its plans for adaptive reuse of a building that is very valued by the residents in my riding of Cambridge.

AGINCOURT JUNIOR PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms. Soo Wong: I rise today in the House to recognize a great institution in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt. Located on Lockie Avenue, near Midland and Sheppard Avenues, Agincourt Junior Public School is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year.

When the school first opened in 1914, it consisted of four classrooms from grade 1 to grade 12 and was the first public school built in Scarborough. This was followed by Agincourt Collegiate Institute in 1915.

Today, Agincourt Junior Public School is an architectural landmark. With additions over the years, this school now has eight classrooms for junior kindergarten to grade 6 and a library resource centre. As a historical building, Agincourt Junior Public School has a unique authenticity, while still serving the needs of over 200 students and families in Scarborough–Agincourt.

On Saturday, September 20, at 10 a.m., students, alumni, teachers, parents and residents of Scarborough–Agincourt will be celebrating Agincourt Junior Public School's 100th anniversary. I look forward to joining them in celebrating the past 100 years, and I am confident that Agincourt Junior Public School will continue to provide quality public education in the next 100 years.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Ms. Soo Wong: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Anne Stokes): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 14, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts / Projet de loi 14, Loi visant à mettre en œuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MAGNA CARTA DAY ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LE JOUR DE LA GRANDE CHARTE

Mrs. Munro moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 23, An Act to proclaim Magna Carta Day / Projet de loi 23, Loi proclamant le Jour de la Grande Charte.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mrs. Julia Munro: The Magna Carta is a revolutionary document that influenced the English system of common law and was a precursor in the development of England's and, later, Canada's constitutional monarchies.

Some 800 years ago, King John affixed his seal to the Magna Carta, which placed limits on the monarch's power to overrule the law and protected the rights of ordinary people.

The document introduced key principles that hold true in democratic societies today, including equal justice for everyone, freedom from unlawful detention, the right to a trial by jury and rights for women.

It is important for the Magna Carta to be honoured and remembered as a document that changed the course of history. The fundamental traditions of equality and freedom that characterize our democratic society, particularly that nobody—not even the crown—is above the law, originated in this important document.

PROHIBITING DRIVING WITH UNLAWFUL HANDGUNS ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR L'INTERDICTION DE LA CONDUITE AVEC DES ARMES DE POING ILLÉGALES DANS LE VÉHICULE

Mr. Colle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 24, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act and the Civil Remedies Act, 2001 to promote public safety by prohibiting driving in a motor vehicle with an unlawfully possessed handgun / Projet de loi 24, Loi modifiant le Code de la route et la Loi de 2001 sur les recours civils afin de promouvoir la sécurité publique et d'interdire la conduite sur la voie publique d'un véhicule automobile avec une arme de poing dont la possession est illégale.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Mike Colle: As it's now constituted, it is almost impossible for the police to charge anyone who is found to have an unlawful handgun in their possession, because of the complexity and the weakness of the federal Criminal Code. Therefore, this would empower the police to impound the motor vehicle and suspend the driver's licence of an individual who has an unlawful handgun in their possession, in their car. Therefore, that car would be taken off the road, as we have done with the Civil Remedies Act, which allowed for police officers to take stunt drivers off the road. They get their car impounded. They get their driver's licence taken away.

I think anybody driving with a loaded unlawful handgun in this province should be off the road. That's what this bill is about, Mr. Speaker.

AUDITOR GENERAL AMENDMENT ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE VÉRIFICATEUR GÉNÉRAL

Mr. Norm Miller moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 25, An Act to amend the Auditor General Act / Projet de loi 25, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le vérificateur général.

1520

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Parry Sound—Muskoka for a short statement?

Mr. Norm Miller: This bill amends the Auditor General Act to permit the Auditor General to conduct special audits of public contractors. A public contractor includes any body or entity that delivers programs or services on behalf of the crown and that receives payment or finan-

cial assistance from the crown or another entity, or is empowered by the crown to collect fees for its services.

And, Mr. Speaker, I believe this will allow the auditor to more fully do her job.

PETITIONS

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Ms. Laurie Scott: Youth mental health in our schools and communities:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas youth mental health in the province of Ontario is rising at an alarming rate. According to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 70% of mental health problems and illnesses have their onset during childhood or adolescence. Research shows that early identification leads to improved outcomes;

“Whereas, pursuant to the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, studies suggest 15% to 21% of children and youth, approximately 467,000 to 654,000 children and youth in Ontario, have at least one mental health disorder. The consequences can affect children and youth now and into adulthood, their families/caregivers, schools, communities, employers and the province as a whole;

“Whereas the 2010 Ontario report by the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, entitled *Navigating the Journey to Wellness: The Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan for Ontarians*, made specific recommendations that would address the growing mental health and addiction crisis among youth in the province, but no further concrete steps have been taken;

“Whereas waiting lists for help are at a crisis level and our schools do not have the resources to deal with the growing incidents of bullying, addiction, anxiety, depression and suicide. Education and awareness is critical to remove the stigma;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to prioritize funding and resources for our schools and communities to help our youth with mental health and addiction illnesses and the resulting consequences.”

It's signed by many people from my riding.

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from Mrs. Theresa Nicholas from Naughton, in my riding. It reads as follows:

“Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline; and

“Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

“Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of gas-price regulation; and

“Whereas jurisdictions with gas-price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario” to:

“Mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition.”

I support this petition, will affix my name to it, and ask David to bring it to the Clerk.

LEGAL AID

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly which reads as follows:

“Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid clients within a community of nearly 800,000 population; and

“Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

“Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds in the” Ontario “budget, and adopt a population-based model, factoring in population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner.”

I am pleased to sign and support this petition and to ask page Nardien, who is from the proud community of Mississauga–Streetsville, to carry it for me on this, probably her last week with us in the Legislative Assembly—and it's been good to have her.

CREDIT UNIONS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: “Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

“Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario's economy and create jobs in three ways:

“—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

“—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

“—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries.”

Speaker, I sign my name to this and hand it to page Ayesha.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have a petition from the people across Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

“Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

“Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

“Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

“Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

“Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

“Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research.”

Speaker, I affix my name to this petition and send it with Matthew to the Clerk.

CREDIT UNIONS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of the Credit Unions of Ontario and my good friends at the Motor City Community Credit Union. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families

to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

“Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows ...

“—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

“—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

“—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries.”

Speaker, I agree with this petition. I will sign my name to it and give it to page Lavanya to bring up to the Clerk.

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

Mr. Victor Fedeli: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

1530

“Whereas the province of Ontario is the only province in Canada that does not allow the provincial Ombudsman, who is an officer of the Legislature, to provide trusted, independent investigations of complaints against hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies, police, retirement homes and universities; and

“Whereas the people wronged by these institutions are left feeling helpless and most have nowhere else to turn for help to address their issues;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To grant the Ombudsman of Ontario the power to investigate hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies, police, retirement homes and universities.”

I'll sign my name and give this to page Josée.

HOME CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from the people of Peterborough, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas many Ontarians need health care services at home and 6,100 people are currently on wait-lists for care;

“Whereas waiting for over 200 days for home care is unacceptable;

“Whereas eliminating the wait-lists won't require any new funding if the government caps hospital CEO salaries, finds administrative efficiencies in the local health integration networks (LHINs) and community care access centres (CCACs), standardizes procurement policies and streamlines administration costs;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"That a five-day home care guarantee is established and existing wait-lists eliminated so that Ontarians receive the care they need within a reasonable time frame."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Matthew to bring it to the Clerk.

CREDIT UNIONS

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario's economy and create jobs in three ways:

"—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

"—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

"—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries."

I support the petition, and I give my petition to page Nardien.

WIND TURBINES

Ms. Laurie Scott: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Premier Kathleen Wynne and the Minister of Energy Bob Chiarelli have publicly stated that there will be no time extensions for large-scale FIT contracts in Ontario, and the Ontario Power Authority CEO, Colin Andersen, has stated the authority is expecting developers to meet contract commitments; and

"Whereas the Premier, minister and the power authority must recognize that damage to our rural area from being under continuing threat by industrial wind turbine developers for three years is serious and unacceptable; and

"Whereas the FIT contracts for the Sumac Ridge, Snowy Ridge, Settlers Landing and Stoneboat projects—all on or near the Oak Ridges Moraine and in the former Manvers township in the city of Kawartha Lakes—have already been extended for one year or longer;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario, the Minister of Energy the Honourable Bob Chiarelli, and the Ontario

Power Authority not issue any further time extensions for FIT contracts and, in particular, for the Sumac Ridge, Snowy Ridge, Settlers Landing and Stoneboat projects—before or after expiry of such contracts. We are advised, and we believe, that the 'force majeure' clause in the FIT contracts is completely inapplicable to these projects; accordingly, we respectfully further request the Legislature to instruct the Minister of Energy to adhere to his assurance that extensions will no longer be granted to wind project proponents who have no contractual right to such an extension and who fail to meet their contractual commitments."

It's signed by people from Kawartha Lakes and Cavan, and I'll hand it to page Stephanie.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, a petition signed by people right across this great province:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this petition. I will sign my name to it and give it to Brendan to bring up to the Clerk.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The time for petitions is over.

ORDERS OF THE DAY**BUILDING OPPORTUNITY
AND SECURING OUR FUTURE ACT
(BUDGET MEASURES), 2014****LOI DE 2014
OUVRANT DES PERSPECTIVES
ET ASSURANT NOTRE AVENIR
(MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)**

Mr. Naqvi, on behalf of Mr. Sousa, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 14, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts / Projet de loi 14, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Naqvi.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I'm not going to talk for too long. I just want to say that I will be sharing my time with the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, the member from York South–Weston.

I'm very happy and excited to see that we are starting third reading on the budget bill. As I and many members from the government side had the opportunity to say, this is a very important piece of legislation, implementing our government's budget, in making sure that we are investing in our communities, investing in our people; ensuring that we're investing in much-needed transit and transportation infrastructure across the province, in all our communities, so that people and goods can move from one place to another; and also focusing on retirement income security for those Ontarians who do not have workplace pensions, something that I've heard in my community of Ottawa Centre quite often.

I'm very happy to see that this bill is up for third reading debate. I really hope that all members of this House will be voting in support of this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from York South–Weston.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I am very pleased to rise today for the third reading of Bill 14, the Building Opportunity and Securing Our Future Act. The bill was thoroughly reviewed, clause by clause, by the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs yesterday, and I want to thank my fellow committee members for the detailed attention to the proposed amendments. I would also like to thank the many organizations that took part in the discussion and shared their valuable input.

Mr. Speaker, I will use this time to again highlight how this bill would support a brighter, stronger future for the people of this province. The Building Opportunity and Securing Our Future Act is our government's plan to build on the strengths of Ontarians to help everyone achieve their best so that together we can help grow our economy. We would do this by investing in people, building modern infrastructure, and supporting a dynamic and innovative business climate.

Our plan would invest in transportation infrastructure so that goods and people can get where they need to go.

Our plan would help give people greater security in retirement, especially the middle class; because we know that we must do more to ensure that people have adequate savings in their retirement years.

1540

Our plan would continue to focus on managing responsibly, because we know that making every dollar count will create a more efficient government. We remain firmly committed to balancing the budget by 2017-18.

Mr. Speaker, I will take a moment to remind the House of some of the important initiatives included in this bill. A notable change from the previous budget bill includes amendments to the Gasoline Tax Act which would increase the tax rate on aviation fuel by one cent per litre each year for four years, beginning on September 1, 2014. The revenue generated by this change would be dedicated to public transit, transportation infrastructure and other priority infrastructure projects across the province.

This bill also includes amendments to the Legislative Assembly Act which would continue the MPP pay freeze from April 1, 2014, until the budget is balanced.

Mr. Speaker, this bill proposes legislative changes to foster a fair society. This includes amendments to create the administrative child support calculation service that would help parents determine child support through a new online service without going to court.

Our 10-year plan will help create a stronger Ontario. It will build opportunities by investing in Ontario's strength, and that is its people. Our new vision for education would continue investments in early learning. Through additional funding of \$33.6 million over the next three years, we would support the ongoing operation and modernization of the child care system. Our plan would see the implementation of full-day kindergarten by September of this year, which means that full-day kindergarten would be available to approximately 265,000 children across the province, saving families up to \$6,500 a year per child on child care costs, and most importantly, giving Ontario's youngest learners the best start to their education.

Mr. Speaker, I've said this before: Ontario remains among the top jurisdictions in North America for talent, training and skills development. We plan on making sure that every eligible student can pursue their education regardless of their financial circumstance. That is why the 30% Off Ontario Tuition grant would continue to support up to 260,000 students through their studies.

And we won't stop there. We will invest in our youth who have shouldered the brunt of job losses in the last recession. We plan to continue to help young people gain work experience and find jobs by extending the youth jobs strategy. We will focus on the services that are important to the people of Ontario by keeping education and health care strong. Our plan would see more than \$750 million in additional funding by 2016-17 in more home and community care services, making sure that our health

care system puts patients first and responds to their needs.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario is a great place to live, to work and to do business, in part, because of our investments in hospitals, schools and transportation infrastructure, and we plan to continue building Ontario up to help stimulate the economy, create jobs, and increase prosperity and fairness for Ontarians.

Our planned infrastructure investments would support more than 110,000 jobs, on average, each year in construction and related industries. By making strategic investments in roads, bridges and public transit, we will help manage congestion and travel times for commuters. We will move Ontario forward through new funding for investment in transportation infrastructure. Our plan would make nearly \$29 billion available for investment over the next 10 years for public transit, transportation infrastructure and other priority infrastructure across the province.

The greater Toronto and Hamilton area, Mr. Speaker, would receive \$15 billion, and other regions of Ontario would receive nearly \$14 billion. In the GTHA, proceeds from the fund would be invested in public transit priorities to address congestion, and outside the GTHA, the dedicated fund would be used for important infrastructure projects. This includes supporting local and regional transit, roads, bridges and other critical infrastructure.

Our plan would invest \$2.5 billion over the course of this year for highway rehabilitation and expansion projects across the province. This will create jobs and help move goods to market faster. We also plan to support municipal roads and bridges through a new, permanent \$100-million fund.

We are committed to investing up to \$1 billion towards infrastructure development in the Ring of Fire, creating thousands of jobs in northern Ontario and providing more opportunities for aboriginal communities.

We will continue to build strong public services. Through an investment of \$700 million over the next decade, we will support critical repairs in hospitals so that patients can receive high-quality health care.

We plan to continue to fund repairs in the post-secondary sector with additional funding of approximately \$500 million over the next 10 years. Our plan would improve school conditions, support safe and healthy learning, and modernize classrooms.

Ontario is an international hub for business and has been ranked as Canada's most competitive province, but we have to build Ontario even stronger. We know that productivity is a key driver of economic growth and prosperity, and we know that a key challenge for Ontario and for countries around the world will be raising productivity growth in the future. That is why our plan is focused on creating business investments, developing a culture of innovation and bringing high-quality jobs to Ontario.

We are going global. Ontario's trade offices around the world are facilitating investments, and we will expand our growing global trade strategy to promote On-

tario companies' quality goods and services. This will help exporters find new markets that connect foreign buyers with potential Ontario exporters. It will help small and medium-sized businesses grow and create jobs.

The new 10-year, \$2.5-billion Jobs and Prosperity Fund would help secure business investments to support growth and create good jobs at home.

A dedicated food-processing stream under the Jobs and Prosperity Fund would help Ontario's farmers, through an investment of \$40 million annually, to enhance productivity and competitiveness and expand market reach throughout Ontario and abroad.

We are committed to helping Ontario's innovators and entrepreneurs bring their discoveries to market. Through the Ontario Research Fund, we plan on dedicating \$250 million over the next three years to invest in leading-edge research infrastructure. These investments will help sustain Ontario's long-term prosperity by supporting research that will create the technologies and well-paid jobs of the future.

We are also providing \$25 million in funding over the next five years to support the Institute for Quantum Computing at the University of Waterloo, which will position Ontario at the forefront of the emerging field of quantum computing.

We are proud to invest in the people of this province, in modern infrastructure, and to develop a competitive business climate. We want to make sure that our economy draws on everyone's capabilities.

After raising the minimum wage to \$11 as of June 1, 2014, we plan on tying it to inflation to provide fairness to low-income workers and predictability for businesses.

Mr. Speaker, we increased the annual Ontario Child Benefit per child to \$1,310, and our plan is to index it to inflation to safeguard the purchasing power—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It's pretty loud, when your member is speaking, if there are four sidebars going on. I'd like to pay attention to what she's saying; maybe you would too. Thank you.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, our plan is to index the Ontario Child Benefit to inflation to safeguard the purchasing power for people. By investing in the Ontario Child Benefit, we will improve the quality of life of low-to-moderate income families and enhance the incomes of half a million families.

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Mr. Speaker, we believe in a society where everyone has the opportunity to reach their potential. That is why we are proposing a new investment of \$485 million over the next three years to support adults with developmental disabilities. This would mean more funding to help individuals in their communities and expanded planning to help individuals transition to adulthood, find employment and achieve greater independence. We would support workers who serve Ontario's most vulnerable by investing \$200 million over three years for front-line workers in the developmental services sector, supporting

salaries and wages as well as the overall transformation and modernization of the sector.

We are committed to managing responsibly. We know that across-the-board cuts hurt public services like health care and education. Through a careful review of spending, we will be able to transform public services to increase efficiencies and improve outcomes. The 2013-14 deficit is estimated to be \$11.3 billion, an improvement of \$0.4 billion compared to the 2013 budget forecast. We will continue to make important decisions to root out waste, to focus on priorities and make every dollar count.

We have a plan to move forward with maximizing and unlocking the full value of provincial assets, while maintaining provincial ownership of core government assets remains a priority. Some assets are no longer critical or necessary for delivering public services and our plan is to explore opportunities to maximize and unlock the value from real estate, as well as improve efficiencies and enhance performance and revenue of crown corporations, like the Ontario Power Generation, Hydro One and the Liquor Control Board of Ontario. We will do this in a responsible manner. We owe it to Ontarians to extract more value for them as taxpayers.

Each and every year, the share of federal revenue raised in Ontario is higher than the share of federal spending in Ontario. This results in an \$11-billion gap, according to most recently available figures. This money could be used in Ontario to fund more hospitals, more nurses, or public transit, but instead, it is redistributed to other regions of Canada to subsidize programs and services that Ontarians themselves may not enjoy. In fact, since 2006, the federal government has taken more than 110 unilateral actions that have hurt people and businesses across Ontario and undermined the province's fiscal plan. That's why our 2014 budget calls on the federal government to be a fair and collaborative partner.

Our plan includes investments in retirement income security, and we plan to invest more than \$130 billion in public infrastructure over the next 10 years. This is nearly five times more per capita than the federal government plans to invest over the same time period. As I mentioned before, we have also committed \$1 billion for infrastructure in the Ring of Fire. That's why we are calling on the federal government to work with us in these areas so that together we can build a more prosperous Ontario in a more prosperous Canada.

Our plan also includes a strategy to enhance retirement savings because we know that most people don't have a workplace pension plan. In many cases, voluntary savings are inadequate, and people are living longer, fortunately. That's why we are moving forward with our proposed mandatory pension plan. The Ontario Retirement Pension Plan would be the first of its kind in Canada and would build on the strengths of the CPP. It would target those most at risk of under-saving, particularly middle-income earners without a workplace pension plan, to help working Ontario families build a more secure retirement future. It would provide a predictable stream of income in retirement by pooling longevity and

investment risk and indexing benefits to inflation. It would require equal contributions to be shared between employers and employees, and it would aim to provide a replacement rate of 15% of an individual's earnings, up to a maximum annual earnings threshold of \$90,000. We would introduce the ORPP in 2017, to coincide with the expected reductions in employment insurance premiums.

Our 2014 budget is our plan for building opportunity and securing our future. It is our plan for a strong Ontario, with more jobs and more opportunity across the province. Our plan, as I've mentioned, includes investing in people, building modern infrastructure, and supporting a dynamic and innovative business climate.

We know that at times it will not be easy. We know that our plan is ambitious and forward-looking. But we are determined to work together with all Ontarians to make the right investments in our future and to remain on our path to balance the budget by 2017-18. I call on all members of this House to support our plan so we can work together to build a stronger future for all Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to comment on the member from York South-Weston's comments, which are on Bill 14, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts, for those just tuning in at home.

There's a fair bit in the budget. There were some highlights made. I think the biggest thing overall that you want to bring people back to is the fact of our record debt and deficit and that the third-largest budget item is just servicing the interest payments on that. That's over \$11 billion, I think, close to \$12 billion, a year. It's the third-largest budget item: health care, education, and then paying the interest on the money that the Liberal government has borrowed on behalf of the people of Ontario.

That is the biggest threat to our front-line health care, education and social programs that we all agree need to be invested in. We hear from our communities all the time. CUPE was protesting yesterday in front of Frost Manor, a long-term-care home in Lindsay, about the cutbacks that they are going to have to caregivers to provide care to our elderly and frail population. That's not a competent government. When you are that deep in debt and deficit, that threatens the province's success. That doesn't encourage businesses to come and set up, to expand and to create the jobs that we all desperately need in the province of Ontario.

I will have time to speak a little bit more later on the pension plan, because I do want to touch on that and what I heard in my riding during the election.

I spoke earlier today about the aviation tax. That's a huge issue that the member from York South-Weston brought up in her comments. We heard from the committee this week, and I just want to quickly say that it is the worst thing that can happen for the aviation industry. Again, I'll go further into that when I have more time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's truly an honour to be able to once again stand in this House and speak on behalf of the residents of Timiskaming-Cochrane, and to respond particularly to the member from York South-Weston regarding this budget.

I'd like to focus on a couple of her comments regarding the potential sale of assets, that these assets would no longer be core or necessary. She also said that this will be done in a responsible manner. That's where we have a problem, because it's nice to say those words, but they don't have much of a track record when it actually comes to disposing of assets—

Interjection: Or responsibility.

Mr. John Vanthof: Or responsibility. And it's happening as we speak with the sale of Ontera, or should I say the giveaway, the fire sale, of Ontera? With the whole ONTC divestment, there was no plan there; there was no overall plan. They didn't even look at the numbers before they announced it, and we're still going down the same road.

A lot of people don't understand. We say "Ontera" and they say, "What's that?" But what's happening with the sale of Ontera is that we're losing jobs. Not only that; we're losing competition in northern Ontario. We're going to be down to one provider. They really don't care. If service isn't really up to standard, you can't really switch to somebody else because there is nobody else to switch to. That's something that isn't being talked about.

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When they talk about, "We're going to take a responsible look at disposing of assets," as we stand here and as we speak right now, it's not happening.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise to support Bill 14, the government bill with respect to the 2014-15 budget.

Mr. Speaker, I'm really pleased that my colleague from York South-Weston, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, spoke about the infrastructure funding and the whole issue about investing in transportation.

As the member from Scarborough-Agincourt, I know of the importance of reducing the congestion here in the city of Toronto. Our government has committed over \$100 billion since 2003, investing in hospitals, schools and transportation infrastructure. This proposed budget for 2014-15 will continue to invest in infrastructure that means so much to Ontarians.

In my riding of Scarborough-Agincourt, right now, as we speak, we're improving the Highway 401 exchange with Victoria Park exit—and this second funding that we are investing in roads and bridges and other critical infrastructure across Ontario.

I dare say that no one here in the chamber would say that they don't want this kind of infrastructure. Every day, when we're sitting in the chamber, I hear every member of this House ask for some kind of infrastructure

capital project. So to say that they're not interested—they say they're concerned about the deficit. All of us should be concerned about the deficit, but at the same time, Ontarians spoke on June 12. They expect our government as well as all members of this chamber to be working together to ensure that infrastructure projects are maintained and improved. At the end of the day, they expect us to deliver what was spoken during the election, but more importantly, what we have committed to.

I'm very pleased to see my colleague the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance talk about this.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you very much, Speaker, for the opportunity to speak for two minutes on this. I want to pick up from where the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane left off.

Today, I read a member's statement a little earlier that talked about the city of North Bay and the city council lobbying hard to save Ontera from being part of the fire sale. I also talked about our federal member of Parliament, Jay Aspin, who has written to the Competition Bureau to try to stop this on the technical merits.

Look, the whole concept of this originally was a budget item. It was to save \$265 million. That's how this whole Ontario Northland sale started. Very quickly, we all lined up to say, "No, you won't have any savings. You won't find a savings of \$265 million."

I don't think the government fully understood the divestiture of Ontario Northland and what it meant in terms of severances. Actually, in the Auditor General's report, she acknowledged that the government truly had absolutely no idea—they did not understand the severance criteria—and as a result, they would not save \$265 million. It would, in fact, cost \$820 million to sell all of Ontario Northland. That's from the Auditor General's report that we, the PCs and the NDP—have successfully fought to bring the Auditor General. She brought that number out, and now that it's known, Speaker, you would think that they would pull back entirely from the fire sale of Ontario Northland. Instead, they're bent on selling this one division, even though according to the Auditor General's numbers, if we leaf through her report, it's going to cost the taxpayers between \$50 million and \$70 million to do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from York South-Weston has two minutes.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I want to thank my colleagues, the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane, the member from Scarborough-Agincourt and the member from Nipissing, for their comments.

I think it is important to manage responsibly, and that's exactly what we intend to do. We want to maintain, I said, provincial ownership of all core government assets. That remains a priority.

It is also important to explore opportunities that may or may not be there, but we owe it to Ontarians, the people who we have the honour to represent, to make

sure that we are reviewing these investments that we are making as a province and managing every dollar responsibly. We have to learn from our mistakes; there's always a way to do things better, and we intend to be very responsible going forward.

I think it's very important that we also speak about the investments that this government plans to make in infrastructure. The member for Scarborough–Agincourt was talking about the investments in her riding. I know that even in my riding of York South–Weston right now, the building of the Eglinton Crosstown is going full speed. That's very important not only to the residents of my riding, but across the city of Toronto it's important to many people. It means getting to work faster. It means more productivity for even small businesses.

Then the other big infrastructure project in my riding is the GO Georgetown–Kitchener line and the UP Express to the airport. All-day, two-way GO is very important to many people in this province, and electrification is important to the ridings in Toronto.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: It's always exciting to stand, look at the clock and see that I have an entire hour. Settle in, everybody, and enjoy the next hour-long speech. I know how excited you are.

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'm thrilled with that. It always is an honour.

It truly is an honour to rise in this Legislature to speak, Speaker. Today, I am going to talk about components of the budget. I'm going to walk us all through many of the components. I'd like to start with one of the Liberals' own consultants, who was hired more than two years ago. I'm going to read some exact quotes from Don Drummond to kick this all off.

Don Drummond outlined some big-ticket reforms that he said would be “an important turning point in the province's history.” These are all quotes now, so I won't repeat the word “quote” every time. He called for a “sharp degree of fiscal restraint.” He said, “The government must take daring fiscal action early,” and we must “act swiftly and boldly.” To balance the budget will “require tough decisions,” and “the treatment may be difficult.” “Most of the burden ... must fall on spending.” He called for “a wrenching reduction from the path that spending is now on.”

Speaker, here we are, more than two years later, and the Liberals are now implementing an expenditure review to study whether to take any of those urgent actions of two years ago that were recommended by their own economist.

That's how we started on this long path. We've learned a few things along the way, though. We continue to hear—and the member who spoke earlier repeated what the Premier has said and what the finance minister has said: that they are on track to balance the budget by 2017-18. Well, let me bring some actual facts to the floor of this Legislature.

Again, if we look at the government's own documents—these are documents from the Ministry of Finance that were delivered to this Liberal government. At the time, it was called Confidential Advice to Cabinet, and it was alarmingly opposite to what the government claims.

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If you look in the budget of last year, Speaker, there's a quote that says that “the government is on track to meet the steadily declining deficit targets outlined in the 2012 budget” and achieve a surplus in 2017-18. This is the government's discussion of what they're telling the people. This is printed.

In the document from the Ministry of Finance, it's the opposite. These are the documents we were never supposed to see. This is the confidential advice, and it says, for 2014-15 and 2015-16, the government is “not on track to meet” the budget deficits. This is the Ministry of Finance internal documents, confidential advice to the Premier of Ontario when Kathleen Wynne took over the Liberal government. She asked for a report on the status and she—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Could the member from Ajax–Pickering and the ministers—they've got their little devices out. You might want to go in the backroom if you want to converse through your devices. Thank you. You've been there a long time. I'm not quite sure if you were going to be part of the woodwork there, you've been there so long. I think we could take that outside. Thank you so much.

I'll remind the minister from northern affairs that when he crosses the floor in front of the Speaker, he should acknowledge the Chair. Thanks so much.

Continue.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker. As I was suggesting—

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Now you're going to miss the rest of this presentation, and I'm sorry. I'll send it over to you.

These are the confidential documents that the Premier asked for from her Ministry of Finance, and received, that said, “You are not on track to meet the budget,” yet they went out and told the world, the taxpayers and this Legislature that they were indeed on track.

So, Speaker, I wanted to bring that to the floor of this Legislature because we continue to hear one thing from the government in terms of the 2014 budget, which is the same as we heard in the 2013 budget, which was contrary to the actual facts from their own Ministry of Finance that were to be kept from us at one point.

I wanted to continue on this theme for a moment, Speaker, of the fact that we don't actually have all the facts. This is actually a very disturbing scenario that's playing out right now. The real numbers have not been presented to us for almost a year now—certainly more than three quarters of a year.

Last October, Finance Minister Charles Sousa failed to deliver the long-range assessment of Ontario's fiscal environment as he was obligated to do under the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act. He was supposed to turn over the numbers but never did. Here's what I asked him. This is a quote from Hansard. Here's what I asked him during question period last October, only a few days after the law said he had to turn over these numbers: "Minister, the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act ... states, 'Within two years after each provincial election, the minister shall release a' long-term 'assessment of Ontario's fiscal environment.' Minister, you're two weeks late. When will you be releasing this assessment that you were legally required to release ..."

So the minister responded that there's a fall economic statement coming out and that first-quarter results—we will be hearing of it in the fall economic statement. Basically, he said, "Look, there's a fall economic statement coming out. You'll get it then." When the fall economic statement did come out, there were no medium-term outlook numbers included. In addition, individual ministry expense numbers were not listed for 2016-17, just the total program spending which magically falls within this balanced budget; no numbers to back it up.

Then, in February, the minister announced he would not be presenting the third-quarter results on February 15. People, this is also something that's required under the law, under the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act. They've been keeping the statistics from us because all of these figures would back up what their own Ministry of Finance said, that they're not on track to balance the budget.

I wanted to start off by at least talking about the fact that when they tell us something—we have been in a minority government; we've been able to get the truth because in the committees where our two opposition parties held a majority, we were able to ask for these documents, vote on them and be eventually awarded the documents.

Sadly, those days of actually seeing the facts are long gone now. For the next four years, in a majority government, we have no way any further to get the kinds of documents that we were able to get in the last two and a half years, which literally blew the lid off the gas plant scandal, which got us to the Ornge scandal facts, which showed us they're not on track to balance and a myriad of other details—Ontario Northland, which we spoke about earlier: the fact that at the time, when they were telling us one thing, a savings of \$265 million, the documents showed us it was actually going to cost \$790 million, something they never admitted to until they were outed with these documents, and finally the Auditor General brought the real number, and by that time it had grown to \$820 million.

Those days are over. I just have to say that: Those days of getting to the bottom of these stories and getting to the facts, they're over. But we will continue to dig, and dig deep, for everything. They say one thing, but they do another.

Here's a great example, Speaker: In the budget, they speak about the Ring of Fire. On May 25, our Premier was in Thunder Bay and she gave a great announcement. I want you to know that I was very pleased when I heard that announcement.

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Don't worry; it didn't last long.

It said, "We will commit \$1 billion, with or without federal government involvement, towards transportation infrastructure that will help make the Ring of Fire a reality." Sadly, that joy in northern Ontario did not last long because, as we've now seen on page 89 of the budget—let me read you what it says: "The province is willing to commit up to \$1 billion towards infrastructure development, contingent on matching investment by the federal government." So they've backed down from their first statement, "with or without." It's a bold statement during a campaign. We always hear these things during the campaign: "This is what we promise." This is the reality; page 89 tells the truth.

Sadly, we've seen very little activity in the Ring of Fire, so I want to take a few minutes and talk about the Ring of Fire, because it is one of my favourite topics, as people who are viewing know. I love to speak about the Ring of Fire. It is a place I've been to four times now. It's complicated to get there; I'll give you that. It's not an easy task to get to the Ring of Fire. It's a lot easier in the winter, by the way. It is in the Far North. I would envision that it looks today like what it must have looked like in Sudbury over a hundred years ago.

It's in the middle of nowhere; that's putting it bluntly. It's in the Far North. It's about 300 kilometres due west of Attawapiskat. If you look on the map and you look at the bottom end of Hudson Bay, James Bay, you'll see Attawapiskat, you'll see Moosonee. Look due west, about 300 kilometres, and you'll find Webequie, a beautiful First Nations community. This is just a little bit east of Webequie.

In the summer, you fly to Webequie. You get yourself down to the shore and you take a float plane from there into the Ring of Fire area. From there, you take another helicopter ride that gets you into the base camp. This is where there were almost three dozen companies who have staked claims. There were really about three that were very actively working.

In the winter, it's a lot easier to get there, as I've said. You fly directly from where you're leaving and you land right on Koper Lake. The lake has a runway that's ploughed on it. It's very exciting to do that if you've never done that. You land on the lake, and then you take the helicopter ride into the base camp.

I have to tell you, the first time I ever flew in there, I was so excited to see these blue-and-white tents, the tent city that was created. Because back in the day, between 1978 and 1992, when I owned my own company, a marketing company here in Ontario, one of my clients was Canadian Can-Tex, and they proudly make these canvas buildings that were bought by base camps up in the Ring of Fire. So as we were flying in, I could see my former

clients' products there—a big smile on my face. As we got a lot closer, as the helicopter came down we saw these mounds—just mounds—of drill rods.

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Again, in my corporate days in the 1970s and 1980s, we had about 10 clients in the mining sector, from J.S. Redpath, from mining and engineering firms, and Atlas Copco, who make drill bits. There was a company called Craig Bit, who became Kenroc and then became Atlas Copco. These were all clients, and all of these companies—there are 12 in North Bay and one in Powassan—make these drill bits. There are mounds of them stacked up there. It was so exciting to see that, because a lot of those products were made in my hometown.

As we landed and started talking to the base camp operators, and to the vice-president of Noront and people from Cliffs—Noront, that one summer, had spent about \$200 million drilling. These are drill bits that they need, that are made in my hometown. These are drill rods. This is actual drilling equipment that is made all throughout Ontario. It's great business all throughout Ontario, not just in northern Ontario. These companies had about \$200 million in business that one year.

As I said, I've been there four times. The second and third times I was there, there was very little action going on, and I said to the president of the company, "What the hang is going on here? How much are you spending on drilling this year?", considering they spent \$200 million on drilling the year before. The answer was, "Nothing. Zero." Well, the problem is that they have shareholders, and they said, "Why would we continue to spend our shareholders' money when there's no rail, there's no road, there's no way to get the products out of the Ring of Fire?" With all the time that has passed, they had run out of hope as well. I think that's the most upsetting part of it, that they've run out of hope.

Sadly for some, they've run out of time. As we know, one of the majors has now pulled out. They've now moved out of Ontario, as a matter of fact, not just out of the Ring of Fire, and not just out of Toronto, where their head office was here. They've moved out of Ontario. They sold their base camp.

They went from 125 people each—250 men and women who were working there, just at the exploration stage. This was just exploring for the minerals, never mind actually drilling when they're in production—the amount of people that they'd be. This is just exploring. They've gone now. There are about four, five or six people left now up in that whole place. It's very sad.

My fourth trip up there was the saddest—to see the torn plastic flapping in the winds of camps that have been abandoned. It was very, very sad to know that, so far in the drilling that they've done, they've determined that there is about \$60 billion worth of chromite—it's a metal that they found—along with the nickel, gold, silver, platinum and the other ores.

Chromite is the metal that is needed to make stainless steel. There is \$60 billion in chromite sitting there, Speaker, that is untapped, because there is no way in and

no way out for the ore. Again, as I have been saying to this government: Ontario Northland has been your expert in hauling ore. You own Ontario Northland. The people of Ontario own this. It's owned by the taxpayers. They're not at the table. They're not at the design stage to talk about road or rail. They're not there.

This is a lost opportunity that I am genuinely hoping that we can see be captured. It's got to happen. It's got to happen—not just for the north, but for all of Ontario. The engineering firms, the legal firms and the accounting firms all through Ontario are depending on this business.

I wanted to speak about another item in this tax-and-spend budget, and it's the tax. We held hearings on Monday here in the Legislature, and we heard from a couple of the aviation firms, who talked to us about the crushing effect that this tax increase will have. Now, it doesn't sound like much; it's only a penny, then two cents, then three cents, then four cents. It's a 148% increase. Tax on aviation fuel today in Ontario is 2.7 cents, and it's going to 6.7 cents incrementally. The aviation sector calculates this will cost about 400,000 passengers a year—292,000 to 400,000 passengers a year. It will cost several thousand jobs. Why, Speaker? Because new taxes never create jobs. It works the opposite way, people; it works the opposite way. I've never seen a tax that has created jobs.

It's going to cost more to fly out of Canada, which means this budget item is an economic development initiative for Buffalo. It's a great economic development initiative for Detroit and all other border cities where people will cross the border and fly out of the United States because it's cheaper. Why would we be doing this when other jurisdictions are eliminating the gas tax on international flights? Look at British Columbia: They got it right. Other provinces than Ontario got it right. British Columbia eliminated the gas tax on international travel, and as a result, Vancouver now has 22 new international flights bringing thousands upon thousands upon tens of thousands of people; more employees in repair, overhaul and maintenance; more hangar fees; more fuel that's sold; more business. Business is what makes it spin.

Here we are in Ontario, when other people are eliminating the gas tax, and we're adding it. "We've got a great idea: Let's have a gas tax." Why? Because they cannot balance their budget. So they look to all sources to tax, and then, of course, sadly, they continue to spend. It's the spending side of the formula that they should be working on, not the taxing side.

It's not only passenger travel that will be affected. Think how much cargo comes in and out of Ontario. All of our manufacturers that produce goods that are flown to markets around the world have a tax added to them, which means products are going to become more expensive. The products that we buy are all going to become more expensive. So while others are eliminating, we're adding.

Speaker, I visited aviation firms in the North this last weekend. I sat and had breakfast with the president of one of the companies in North Bay. I talked to you earlier

about the fact that I had my own corporation until 1992. I sold it and took over a non-profit—actually, started a non-profit and ran it for seven years—in the aerospace sector. When the federal government downsized CFB North Bay and walked away from all the hangars, I and six others bought the facility from the federal government for a dollar. We had a great opportunity, a really great business idea and a great business plan. We formed a local development corporation, and this local development corporation was tasked to bring aerospace companies to North Bay. Very quickly, I'll run to the end of the story, because it did take seven years. We ran this non-profit basically on a dollar. We had virtually no expenses, and for seven years no sales, but eventually we attracted a couple of international aerospace companies, who are being affected by this budget today.

I wrote a business plan that attracted Bombardier to move to North Bay, Ontario, where they assemble their water bomber aircraft. I also wrote the business plan that attracted Voyageur Airways to North Bay, and today they have 352 employees. These are the kinds of companies who are going to be affected by the aviation fuel tax. Any company that's in a flight training school, companies that do repair and overhaul where aircraft have to fly in, companies that are in charter or scheduled airline services, their bills are going to go up. Companies who are in the cargo business, their bills are going to go up.

I met with companies over the weekend, and I assure you, Speaker, that the two representatives who spoke in the committee hearings on Monday are accurate. They are telling us this 148% tax increase is going to cost 292,000 to 400,000 passengers, and it's going to cost us several thousand jobs in Ontario. It will likely create several thousand jobs in Buffalo, Detroit and all of the other border communities as passengers rush there to take their flights, which will mean those airlines will bring on more flights, and they'll have a greater requirement for hangar space, repair and overhaul, staffing, and airside services. This is what's going to happen, Speaker.

1630

Another area that we heard about through this budget, and a lot of talk about it—I'm going to try to shed some light on it—is the Trillium Trust. Speaker, I have said in the Legislature—in fact, this very morning I stood in the Legislature and said specifically that our party is not against asset sales, not at all. We are, however, against selling an asset, which is a one-time source of revenue, and using it for your operating expenses, using it to bury in your general revenue, which only tries to lower the deficit. It is akin to selling the furniture, or, as some would say, burning the furniture to keep warm. What happens next year when you don't have any furniture to sell or to burn? You're using one-time asset sales to put into general revenue.

I know the government says that's not what they're doing, but we've heard a lot of times what they say they're doing and what the facts are. So let me give you the facts from their own bills, Speaker. When an asset is sold, the first thing that they do is they "qualify the

asset." There are no guidelines to tell us what makes a qualified asset. They decide whether this building that they're going to sell is qualified to become part of the Trillium Trust. So if the answer is no—and, again, we don't know the criteria of what makes it qualified—then they sell the building, and they put the money in general revenue. We'll never know—we'll never know, Speaker—it'll just be lumped in with general revenue. The building is sold. The money is gone. Nothing good for next year comes out of it.

If it does qualify under these mysterious criteria, then—and here's where it gets tricky—they may require, not must require, that a portion—not all of it, but a portion—be credited to the Trillium Trust. So here we go again. Once an asset is qualified, they don't have to put it in the Trillium Trust; they may put it there. And they don't have to put it all there; they may put a portion of it. So where's the money going? Again, we'll never know. There's no auditing mechanism on each transaction.

I would attest that the bulk of it is actually going into general revenue. That's where it starts, by the way. It goes into the consolidated revenue. Then it's supposed to be pulled out to put in the trust. It may be pulled out, and it may be a portion. I contest that that's how they plan on balancing their budget. They're going to sell assets and put it in general revenue, instead of cutting back on their spending. They can only tax so much before people will revolt. They're going to bring this revenue in by selling buildings, selling assets. I believe that's what they're going to do.

Speaker, yesterday in clause-by-clause, where all three parties reviewed the budget schedules, I asked for some amendments. Our party asked for some amendments. One of them was to bring the Auditor General in so that whenever an asset is sold, the Auditor General would report to the Legislature within 90 days what was sold, whether it was a qualified or not-qualified asset and, if it was not a qualified asset, where did the money go? If it was a qualified asset, did the money get into the Trillium Trust, and, if so, how much of it went in? It's very simple. It's all about being open and transparent. It was what I would have thought a very friendly amendment—open and transparent. That's all we asked for: What are you selling? How much did you get for it? What are you doing with the money? This is not rocket science. This is a very simple request of legislators working together.

The Liberals voted against that. They voted us down. They voted against open and transparent sale of assets, plain and simple. There's no nice way to say that, Speaker. That is what they did yesterday. They agree with the loophole they have created. Again, I think that loophole was created on purpose. I think it was done with intent. I think the intention was to be able to sell assets, get that money, put it against the deficit so they can achieve this target that their own Ministry of Finance says is not going to be achieved, and we'll never be the wiser. I think that's what they have done. That's why we brought the amendments, and I would suggest that's why, on the

amendments to offer open and transparent sale of assets, they voted us down.

Speaker, I talked to you a little bit earlier about my earlier career as a business person, when I owned the corporation that handled those mining companies; I talked a little bit about my stint in non-profits, which turned out to be 11 years.

Then I ran successfully for mayor of the city of North Bay. One of the first things I did was put assets for sale. Why? Because they were non-productive. When you drive down a street and you see house, house, house, vacant lot, house, house, house—it turned out we owned 108 of those vacant lots around the city. One of the first things I did as mayor was put those lots for sale. We went to the public and told them what we were going to do. We told them that we were going to identify these lots. We advertised them publicly: street name, street address, lot by lot. In many cases, we had photos of them. In many instances, we had—well, we had big “for sale” signs. I know I hammered in some “for sale” signs myself as part of our promotion. We did this in an open and transparent way. I wanted people to know we were selling these non-productive assets. I wanted people to know that. We never did anything but tell people about them. We sold these assets. Two summers before in the city of North Bay, we had construction, sadly, of only seven houses. Two years later, we had construction of 107 houses. It was an absolutely amazing turnaround because we took these non-productive assets and put them for sale. So, philosophically, I’m not against the sale of assets.

We took that money and put it in the reserve. We didn’t put it to balance our budget. We didn’t put it in the operating budget. Because what happens next year when you don’t have 108 lots to sell? How are you going to balance then? That’s what is happening here. We took those properties, we advertised them, we publicized them, and we sold them. People bought them, people built 107 houses in the city that summer, one summer, and we celebrated it.

When I took office, we had the lowest reserves in Ontario at \$4.5 million, and when I left, we had reserves of over \$22 million. So when a storm came in July 2006 and it cost us more than \$1 million and we did not get any assistance from the provincial government, we dipped in. We had the money. It was a one-time event. We used one-time revenue to pay for a one-time, in that case, tragedy. That’s what this is for, not selling your assets for one-time revenue and putting it into your general government. This is going to be awful, Speaker, when they don’t have anything to sell tomorrow. That’s what is going to happen.

That’s why we spent time on Monday talking about the Trillium Trust. That’s why we fought so hard in committee yesterday to have these amendments passed. We spoke passionately, Speaker, about getting these amendments because there are going to be regrets. I think you already know that. I know that you know it’s wrong. I know that you know that. Taking one-time money and

putting it into your operating is wrong, and I know you know that.

1640

Speaker, I want to switch gears and talk about something that wasn’t in the budget that should have been in the budget: energy. There’s nothing in the budget to lower the cost of energy, yet in the finance committee, SCOFEA, as we call it, we toured eight cities together in Ontario, just during the Christmas break. I added 22 cities to that roster and travelled from Sarnia to Kenora, from Timmins to Cornwall, Toronto and everywhere in between. What we heard loud and clear at every one of these finance hearings that were designed to help us craft the budget—we heard about energy everywhere. There wasn’t one stop that we made in any city that people did not line up and talk to us about the skyrocketing energy bills.

We know that when the Liberal government took office power was 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour. Before May, it was 12.9 cents a kilowatt. It tripled under this government. After May, it went over 13 cents a kilowatt hour. Now we have the highest energy rates in North America. That’s what we have in Ontario.

We have 300,000 fewer people working in manufacturing. We have companies who have left Ontario who told us on the way out of Ontario, “Your skyrocketing hydro rates are costing business. We can’t stay here.”

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Yes, I know it’s frustrating; it is frustrating; it’s so frustrating. I sense your frustration that it is a frustrating thing that we have the highest energy rates in North America and companies are leaving one after another after another after another. It’s skyrocketing. It’s gone to 12.9 cents and now over 13 cents.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Oh, God.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Minister of the Environment, would you come to order, please.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I know it’s a sore point with them. When they took office, it was 4.3 cents and now it’s over 13 cents. These are undeniable facts. That’s how much your energy rate is. All you have to do is look at your hydro bill. All you had to do was come with us, with SCOFEA, and listen to the people who lined up. Whether they were representatives from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce or representatives from the food bank, it didn’t matter. Everybody and all sectors came and said to us, “You’ve got to do something about the high cost of energy.”

I’m going to tell you, Speaker, it’s very sad that there’s absolutely nothing in this budget—absolutely nothing—that brings relief to families, to seniors or to businesses for the skyrocketing energy rates. There’s no plan. In fact, the government has said to us: “Brace yourself. Skyrocketing energy rates are going up a further 42% over the next five years.” This is the information that we’re getting from the government. Nobody here is denying that—a 42% increase. I’m denying it. I think 42% is the starting point. I think we’re going to see far greater than a 42% increase. We’ve seen that.

Speaker, the highest energy rates in North America are now causing businesses to leave Ontario. Nothing in the budget—not a peep, not a word, not a mention. They're just going to leave people out there to continue to pay these exorbitant hydro rates and allow companies to continue to leave Ontario because of their hydro rates.

I've given this example many times but there are some new members here, so you're going hear about Xstrata Copper in Timmins, because it's a perfect example of what the Auditor General told us is going to happen. We had just got elected October 6, 2011. In November, the Auditor General came out with his report. It was a scathing—we use that word far too often to describe his, and now her, reports on this government, but it was a scathing report about hydro. One of the things the auditor talked to us about was how many companies were going to be leaving Ontario because of the skyrocketing hydro rates. Nobody over on the other side listened. It was all barracking, and they did not pay attention to this at all. They just—

Ms. Laurie Scott: They deny.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: They continue to deny. Thank you.

So in Timmins, a city of 45,000 people, we saw a company that was at one time the single largest user of power in all of Ontario: 300 megawatts, the single largest user in all of Ontario. They get a knock at the door one day from Quebec, who said, "Why are you in Timmins, 75 kilometres from the Quebec border? You should be in Quebec for cheap power." And they did go. They moved 115 kilometres over the border into Quebec. They terminated 672 men and women in Timmins, tore the facility down to the ground so that they don't even pay property taxes, and moved to Quebec for cheap power. That's an example of exactly what the Auditor General was talking about. You would not pay attention to his threat that day. Now we have, in Timmins alone, 672 fewer people—we've seen the examples all across southeastern and southwestern Ontario.

Not only did we do this eight-city tour, which I extended into a 30-city tour, but during prorogation it gave a real opportunity—at that time, I was energy critic. I travelled to 62 cities during prorogation. It was purely on an energy tour, again, right across all of Ontario, and it was quite amazing that so many companies would show me letters from American companies, especially around Cornwall and Brockville. They would show me letters from mayors in American companies just over the border that said, "I have no idea why you continue to run your company in Cornwall," Brockville, whatever, "when you could cross the border for cheap power." Sadly, some of these companies were tempted and were lured—just the realities of business. They saw the writing on the wall. They heard the Auditor General say that rates were going to triple. They believed the auditor, and they had to go. That's what has happened. But, Speaker, there's not one word in this budget that addresses the single most important issue that we heard—Liberals heard, NDP heard and PCs heard—as we travelled on the same bus

and the same airplane together to these cities. Every one of them talked about energy rates. Sadly, that never made it into the budget. There's no relief coming for families, for seniors and for businesses with respect to their energy rates.

Another issue that this government has been spending a lot of time promoting is their ORPP, the Ontario Registered Pension Plan.

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: It is. It's going to cost jobs. We're going to talk about that again in a second.

Also in the budget is something we do favour, Speaker. It's a PRPP, a pooled registered pension plan. This allows people to be in a large pool of companies from all around Ontario. It allows individuals to get involved in a pension plan, and if they move from one company to another, it's portable. They can transfer it. We do favour the PRPP. It's part of our platform as well. It's part of our beliefs. We believe that. We believe people should be investing. We believe that they should have it portable. We believe that when they die, it should be part of their estate, that their family can share in that money that they have put away. The ORPP, of course, does not do that, as a side unintended consequence, no doubt, that should something happen and you have a premature death, the money that you've invested is gone; the money that your company has invested is gone.

A survey of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business found that 86% of their members are against an ORPP, and 53% of their members said they would have to cut staff if this is implemented. I'll talk about that in a moment.

1650

Speaker, on Monday we had the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. They came and talked about the ORPP as well, and they said in their study that 4% of their members said that they will leave Ontario if this is implemented. I don't think that's an idle threat. They have 60,000 member companies—several million employees, but 60,000 member companies—and 4% is 2,400 that will close and leave Ontario, joining the others that have left Ontario.

I said that the CFIB said that 53% of their members would cut staff. When I was travelling through Ontario in the last couple of weeks, I asked one small business owner with 10 employees—this will be an anecdotal story—to tell me about the ORPP. He said, "I will have to fire one employee, use that salary to pay my share of the pension plan and make the other nine work harder." That's what he is talking about. That's what the CFIB is talking about, but there is somebody else talking about this as well.

Again, I started off this discussion 45 minutes ago, talking about the fact that, when there was a minority government, we had access to files. We could have access to one-time confidential documents, advice to the Premier—all of these documents that I spoke about earlier: the ones that exposed the gas plant scandal, the

ones that exposed Ornge, the ones that exposed the Ontario Northland scandal.

Those documents also talked about an ORPP. It was quite fascinating, actually. It was advice to the Premier that for every \$2 billion spent on this payroll tax, 18,000 jobs would be lost. So, if it does match the CPP, if it gets to that point, that's 150,000 jobs in Ontario that would be lost. The guys at the chamber of commerce weren't making this up. This was the confidential advice to the Premier. This is the advice that she got, as well, telling her that this is going to cost you tens upon tens of thousands of jobs.

You have to ask yourself: Why would you do that, knowing that it's going to cost you jobs, and hearing from the chamber, who are telling you that 4% of their members have said that they'll leave the province, that 86% disapprove and that 53% are going to cut staff? That's what the advice to the Premier was. That's how that got calculated, they said, because of less productivity and companies cutting back.

Basically, on the ORPP, what it is—it's not a voluntary program; it's mandatory. You would pay a portion of your salary—the numbers go from \$700 or \$800 up to \$1,710—and then your employer matches that number. So, in the company of the chap whom I was speaking with, a small tech firm of 10 people, he's talking about \$17,000 as his share. That's just one little company.

You saw the comment the day after this came out about Magna. Their share, they calculated, will be \$36 million a year, and they said, "We're not going to be opening another plant in Ontario." Well, why would you when all you've got is this continual threat and fact of taxes? Tax and spend, tax and spend—these companies are going to continue to leave Ontario. I'm not threatening that these companies will leave; they're going to continue to leave. They're leaving one after another.

We saw it before the election with Kellogg's and all of the other companies that we spoke about—Caterpillar. These are companies that have left Ontario. They didn't close. They're not out of business. Kellogg's, Heinz and Caterpillar aren't out of business; they're just out of Ontario because of the high-cost regime that has been built here in the past 11 years. That's why they're gone.

Whether it's high energy, the threat of the payroll tax or just the threat of taxes in general, this government has a habit of answering their problems by creating a tax. That's what they do.

So the fact that you have a \$12.5-billion deficit—remember the deficit was \$9.2 billion two years ago; it grew to \$11.3 billion last year and now it's forecast to be \$12.5 billion this year. People, we're going the wrong way. This is very concerning and alarming to business. They look at that and think, "You know what? They're going the wrong way. They won't rein in their spending. They're going to come after me next. They're going to come after more taxes." When it comes to making a decision about expanding in Ontario, or even locating in Ontario or closing in Ontario, these are the very decisions that companies bring. This is how business people think.

High taxes don't create jobs. This payroll tax, that aviation tax, those payroll taxes, those income taxes—those are going to cost jobs, plain and simple. People will go elsewhere. We have 300,000 fewer people working in manufacturing today. This is not, "The sky is falling;" I'm telling you that the sky is falling. We have 300,000 fewer people in manufacturing.

Speaker, I can continue to tell you that there are other problems here in Ontario. Let's look just at last month, the month of June: Ontario lost 34,000 jobs just last month, in the month of June. Now, sadly, it was mostly amongst people aged 15 to 24. Our province's unemployment rate is 7.5%—up from 7.3% the month before—compared to the national unemployment rate of 7.1%. This is the 90th consecutive month that Ontario has higher than the national average of unemployment. It's nice to be first in a lot of things, but being first in unemployment is not one of those things; being first in payroll taxes, which we are today, is not one of those things; being first in energy rates is not one of those things to be proud of in Ontario. Ninety consecutive months of unemployment rates higher than the national average. It belies every speech that our Premier has ever given. It simply does that.

These members continue to talk about our strong economy in Ontario when the facts are opposite: 34,000 fewer people working today than last month; 300,000 men and women not working in manufacturing.

Again, one of those confidential documents that we had was very telling. When this government and their ministers continue to tell us one thing about employment—well, here's the quote from the internal document from the secretary of cabinet to the Premier a month after she was elected—of critical importance. This is to the Premier: "The economy has not yet regained the strength of pre-2008." There are "fewer jobs relative to our population and more unemployed." This is the advice to the Premier. She knows there are fewer people working, while "per capita output of the economy remains below its pre-recession benchmark." That's the fact—Speaker, that's the fact.

So here is what's happening: Because they can't balance their budget, because they can't address this \$12.5-billion deficit that they are staring at, their answer was to go on a spending spree. They're going to be spending 5.7 billion new dollars in this budget, taxing people to help pay for it, but, at the end of the day, there's \$3.4 billion more in spending. Speaker, because they can't balance their budget, we have real cuts all across Ontario, whether you are in those cities that we talked about earlier, from Sarnia to Kenora, from Timmins to Cornwall, Toronto and everywhere in between that we toured. Those are the cities we toured.

1700

So here's what they're doing: They are cutting, right across Ontario—they have already cut physiotherapy for seniors. They have done that, Speaker. They have cut physiotherapy to seniors by 100 visits down to four

visits. They have cut diabetes testing strips. They've done that.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): We have a lot of cross-dialogue going on, and we want to listen to the speaker speaking. Especially the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change has been extremely aggressive. I have been overwhelmingly lenient so far, for my nature, so the buck stops here. Okay? Next time I start warning. Thank you.

Continue.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you very much, Speaker. I appreciate that.

These are not anecdotal stories; these are facts. So I would urge you, the member who has asked me about diabetes testing strips, to please call the mayor of Corbeil, Ontario, Mayor Bill Vrebosch, His Worship. He will tell you how his diabetes testing strips have been cancelled and the threat that puts his health under.

Speaker, they've cut cataract surgeries by 39 days. These are real cuts that have happened. These are not anecdotes—real cuts.

Laughter.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: People are suffering in Ontario, and they're laughing. That's a real joke, isn't it? It's real funny to see these people who haven't got their cataract surgery because you can't balance your budget. That's—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Newmarket–Aurora is warned, and the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change is warned.

Laughter.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): And if the member continues to laugh, you'll be going out of here real quick.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker. This is not a joke. These are real cuts that are happening. This isn't a joke, Speaker. These are real cuts that are affecting people's lives. That's the attitude that we get.

We have 300 nurses throughout Ontario, whether it's London or Ottawa, who have been fired, we have teachers who have been fired, we have telecommunications workers who have been fired, all because this government can't balance their budget.

These cuts are real. The job losses that I spoke of, the 34,000 people who lost their jobs last month—those cuts are real. The 300,000 fewer manufacturing jobs that are in Ontario under this government—those job losses are real. Those are real people. The 672 men and women in Timmins who worked at Xstrata Copper—those are real. They're gone. The jobs that will be lost under the implementation of the ORPP, where the chamber, where the federation of business have told us—those are jobs that will be lost for real. These are people's lives.

The money that will be taken from the sale of buildings throughout Ontario and put into operating costs—that's not going to help us tomorrow, Speaker. It's going to help in the short term. It's a band-aid. That's what's happening. The jobs that are being lost at Kellogg's and

Heinz and Caterpillar, as we said earlier, whether it's from high energy rates or high taxes, or just the high-cost regime that has been created in Ontario—those are real.

In aviation, the tax that will be added to aviation fuel—those men and women who work in those businesses and who are looking at you and wondering, “Why are you doing this to me? Why are you doing this to my business? Why are you doing this to my sector?” Those are jobs that will be lost. Those are real people. The 292,000 to 400,000 passengers who will now drive to Detroit, Buffalo or others? Those are statistics of things that will happen. The economic development boom that you're giving to Detroit, Buffalo and others, that will happen. The fact that there were 250 men and women working at the Ring of Fire years ago who have given up hope and have moved out; the companies that have not only moved out of the Ring of Fire, but moved out of Toronto and Ontario? That's a real company. They're gone today because this government wouldn't do anything other than give hollow promises about the Ring of Fire. “We're going to open a development company.” It's the fifth time you've announced it, people—the fifth time. Let's see some action instead of words.

The companies want action. We've become a laughingstock, Speaker, and that's sad. I looked at those men and women. I sat down with them in the base camp, and I ate lunch with these people.

Ms. Laurie Scott: They're gone.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: They're gone; that's right. The member from Haliburton–Kawartha—

Ms. Laurie Scott: —Lakes–Brock.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: —Lakes–Brock was with me on one of the trips. We sat and we had lunch with these people. They're gone. Laurie, they're gone from there. Those 250 men and women have left.

Don Drummond told us that we need to take bold, daring and immediate action. Well, Speaker, that was two years ago. There's nothing bold, there's nothing daring and, two years later, there's certainly nothing immediate about the action that you've taken. Instead, you're increasing taxes and you're increasing spending. Tax and spend, just like we said you would. We've talked to you about your tax-and-spend regime, and that's exactly what you've delivered in this budget, which is why we will not be supporting it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thank you to the member from Nipissing for his comments on the third reading of Bill 14.

One of the things he mentioned was that we are no longer in a minority government, and how it was actually very satisfying, being in a minority government as a new member in 2011, to push this government. We actually got results. On this side of the House, we made sure that when we presented amendments to the budget, they were going to get results for the people of Ontario and set their priorities.

Now we're in a whole different political landscape of what this government looks like, and it's a majority. It's new to me and new to a lot of new members who came in 2011 and 2014. But that is not going to stop the NDP and our MPPs from continually asking you to have a conscience and a conscience on this budget.

I would hope that the new members in the Liberal Party who are here in this Legislature are going to ask your government the tough questions about this budget. We have continually asked your leader, your Premier, to allow the Auditor General to look at this budget. We get dodging answers, we get avoiding answers—a lot of dancing. I urge the members, maybe in your caucus meeting, to bring that up and ask the Premier and your caucus cabinet to be transparent to the people of Ontario about your budget. If you have nothing to hide, let's see it in full view.

That's an interesting concept that we're going to be dealing with in the next four years, being in a majority government and trying to get your answers and get the information we need to give the answers to the people we represent.

The member also talked about the cuts. One comment someone made to me on the campaign trail: This budget is death by a thousand cuts.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to provide comments on Bill 14, the Building Opportunity and Securing Our Future Act, and in particular to respond to the member opposite from Nipissing.

I was pleased to hear the member talk about the Ring of Fire. I know he will join us in supporting a budget which contains \$29 billion in investment in infrastructure, including \$1 billion for the Ring of Fire for transportation infrastructure, which will enhance the development of the area and, of course, attract jobs and investment. I know too that he will join our call on the federal government to partner with us in that investment, which is critically important to that project, to our economy and to the area.

1710

The member opposite also talked about his frustration. I guess that on occasion we share that frustration, particularly when it comes to forgetting some important points, something the member opposite seemed to do on occasion: in particular, in the last government, when we took office in 2003, the \$20 billion in stranded debt that was caused as a result of deregulating and privatizing hydro, and, of course, the Clean Energy Benefit, which would have reduced hydro bills by 10% for everyone and which the party opposite did not support.

I know that the member opposite cares about the Ring of Fire. He cares about infrastructure. He clearly mentioned both, so I would ask him to ask his party colleagues to join us in supporting a plan which would see us build Ontario up.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

The member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock should be in her seat.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Sorry, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): We're on a countdown. You just made it.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I was so comfortable being close to the member from Nipissing, who did a great job of a presentation on the budget analysis by the Liberal government. He has been our finance critic for quite some time now, and he was, as he mentioned, our energy critic before that. He has travelled to communities throughout the province of Ontario.

I certainly know that in the campaign in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock and through the past 10 years, energy has been the number one issue that we have heard, so when the Liberal government brings in a budget that does not even address the issue of the energy prices that have tripled and are going nowhere but up under this present government—it's driving out businesses, it's driving people from their homes—it's kind of shocking.

When the new member from Burlington—and I congratulate her—brings up the fact that we're forgetting a few things, you guys are missing a whole lot of information from your budget. Energy is the number one thing throughout the province of Ontario. How are we going to address that? Well, we're just going to increase the cost and drive out more businesses.

The Ring of Fire was mentioned. I was on a trip up there and saw what the proposed Ring of Fire would look like and how good it will be, not just for the north in job creation; it's a big boon for the whole province of Ontario and the whole country. To make a promise once in the election that, no matter what, we're going to invest in it, and then in the budget to present it as, "Well, only if the feds come to the table"—that's not good government. That's not good policy. That's not good for the province of Ontario.

We talked about the pension plan. When the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and your own Ministry of Finance bring you numbers of how many jobs are going to be lost just because of bringing in a pension plan, should you not be worried? Should you not rethink this whole policy of job killing that you're going to create by putting in a mandatory pension plan?

Mr. Speaker, I've run out of my two minutes, but thank you very much for allowing me to comment today on the member from Nipissing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'm pleased to be able to add my voice to the debate. I want to thank the member from Nipissing for raising a number of issues. I have to agree with him when he highlights the big problems facing our province, particularly with regard to the high unemployment rate, the fact that we are above the national average, and particularly when it comes to youth as well.

I also want to acknowledge and commend the member for raising concerns around the Ring of Fire, the amazing

potential that the Ring of Fire presents and the fact that it is a wonderful opportunity for our province to create manufacturing jobs, to invest in natural resources, and hopefully not only to extract those natural resources but also to provide a mechanism where we actually add value to those resources to create jobs here.

While I disagree with some of the solutions to these problems, I agree with raising those. I think it's important that all members of this House are aware of the problems. If we have a particular circumstance going on in this province where we've seen unemployment rates increase and beat the national average, we need to come up with solutions.

I disagree with the solution that has been proposed by the Conservatives, the idea that we continually need to cut taxes, and that cutting taxes will eventually lead to a trickle-down effect and create more jobs. We've tried that. For the past number of years—for the past decade—we've tried this policy of cutting corporate tax rates and hoping that will create jobs. If something hasn't worked in the past, does it make sense to continually do more of the same, hoping that a new result will occur? That doesn't make sense, in my mind. I think we really need to turn or put a fresh pair of eyes and critically analyze the solution, because it's not in using the same tactics that haven't worked before. We have to come up with something more innovative.

But I certainly agree with some of the key issues that have been raised in terms of the problems with this budget, and I'll get into those in detail in my time. Thank you so much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Nipissing has two minutes.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker. I want to thank the members from London–Fanshawe, Burlington, Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

Speaker, I started the debate an hour ago by reading Don Drummond's comments. I'm going to end by reminding us of his comments and a quick synopsis. Again, two years ago, Don Drummond said that we needed a "sharp degree of fiscal restraint." This budget doesn't have it. He said, "The government must take daring fiscal action early." Well, that was two years ago, so I guess that one's off the list. We must act "swiftly and boldly." Again, swiftly was two years ago, when the deficit was \$9.2 billion; it went to \$11.3 billion and now it's scheduled for \$12.5 billion. So there's nothing swift about it and there's nothing bold about it.

To balance the budget will "require tough decisions." Well, spending 5.7 billion new dollars is not a tough decision; that's the easiest thing to have done. He said that "the treatment may be difficult." Well, there's nothing difficult about a candy-coated budget. Anybody can do that. There's nothing difficult there at all, Speaker. He said, "Most of the burden ... must fall on spending," yet this budget has \$3.4 billion in net new spending. He called for "a wrenching reduction from the path that spending is now on." We know that that did not happen.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? The member from London–Fanshawe.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thank you, Speaker. I'm going to share my time with the member from Oshawa.

Today, I rise to respond to the government's budget, a budget that triggered an election and a budget that we have all come to understand as a Trojan Horse. We have watched this government wither away billions of tax dollars with zero accountability and zero repercussions. In exchange for your \$1-billion boondoggle, the people of Ontario received nothing more than hollow apologies, and now they must withstand your fire sale of assets that you have spent weeks dodging answers on.

The government knows quite well that this budget paves a clear path to austerity. Frankly, I am keen to see the new lengths you will go to to defend your long list of campaign promises contained in this budget. How many government services and assets will be sacrificed to pay for your \$1-billion boondoggle?

Under your leadership, this province has lost the financial status we have worked long and hard for. In fact, the financial rating agency Moody's says that the province's books are headed for trouble under your stewardship. Today the C.D. Howe Institute released a report titled *User Discretion Advised: Fiscal Consolidation and the Recovery*, authored by William Scarth.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Excuse me. The Speaker has good ears, and he saw your sarcasm. Keep it up.

Continue.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: His report calls on the Ontario provincial government to address its long-term sustainability challenges before it embarks on any new major expenditures. We have also seen the headlines from Bloomberg News that warn your budget will lead to the biggest cuts since Harris, and yet this government has remained steadfast in its approach to freebies, no-strings-attached policies and loopholes. I can't honestly say that I am surprised, because this seems to be business as usual for this government.

While this government focuses on its own priorities, I am focused on delivering real results for the people of my riding of London–Fanshawe. What I am seeing is that there is no plan to reduce hydro rates, no plan for new ideas for jobs, no end to corporate tax giveaways that reward companies that ship jobs overseas and, clearly, no credible plan to balance the books, and here we are waiting for this government to hack away at our services and assets to make up for the billions of dollars they themselves allowed to fly out the door.

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This government needs to hear this: The people of London–Fanshawe can no longer afford to pay for the mistakes of this government. Your spending is set to increase by \$3.4 billion, yet you ask the people to do more with less. Your private pension plan is a page right out of Stephen Harper's book, and the public plan you tout won't even be on the radar for three to four years, if

at all. The people of London–Fanshawe need your help now, not years from now. In spite of this government's claims to want to uphold transparency and accountability, the Premier continues to dodge Andrea Horwath and the NDP's very pragmatic call to have your fiscal plan reviewed by the Auditor General.

The Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act calls for an independent review of the government's budget in each election year and you've continued to deny the measures of transparency at every turn, even though this is the only time when the Auditor General has the authority to examine the government's revenue projections, the government's expense estimates and the government's fiscal assumptions. Further, it's the only opportunity for Ontarians to hear from the independent officer about whether your budget can be trusted. It's very disturbing that back in 2004 the Premier actually supported the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act to crack down on the notoriously inaccurate budgets that governments campaign on. Today, the Premier has the opportunity to quell all opposition and doubt about her budget by requesting, under section 17 of the Auditor General Act, that the auditor promptly review the fiscal plan and report publicly on her findings. But alas, we know this will be another squandered opportunity to bring transparency and accountability to this province and to the people of this province.

Why do the Premier's fire sale of public assets, her cuts to public services and her layoffs of up to 100,000 people need to be hidden from the public? I urge the Premier to stand behind the budget she claims is the best way forward for our province. Is it really too much to ask of this Premier that she allow real and genuine debate, rather than refusing to share with all Ontarians her intentions for their future?

Last week in the Legislature, I asked the Premier to provide clear answers on how she plans on paying for a high-speed rail project to London, but the government provided no clear and concrete details on how much they plan to spend and where the money will come from. Transportation specialists have sounded alarm bells on this project, yet this government continues to keep their heads in the sand whenever they are pressed for details of any kind. For a Premier who continues to claim to uphold the importance of transparency and accountability, every step they have taken proves otherwise. But know this: My NDP colleagues and I will continue to hold this government to account for each and every election promise made.

In the last budget, you couldn't keep three promises and now you have made more than 60 promises to the people of this province. I have every intention of ensuring that you are held accountable for your actions. And please know this: We are watching every penny spent and we will continue to demand answers at every turn.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Oshawa.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be sharing my time with the member from Niagara Falls.

I am glad to have this opportunity to respond to this government's budget and to focus on pensions.

Ontarians deserve retirement security and decent pensions. The next generation is not going to be taken care of. Two thirds of Ontarians do not currently have a workplace pension. It is difficult to imagine our province where the majority of our aging population will not have the resources to pay their own way, to afford housing, to buy necessities, to contribute to the economy or to live with dignity. It is a pretty grim reality that we are facing.

We stand in this Legislature and talk, and over the last few days we have heard talk about what is or isn't being done to address youth unemployment in this province and it is worrying, because talk is cheap. Not only do we need to take action now, but we need to start planning for the future. How on earth can our youth, without employment, start to save for retirement when they can't even pay their tuition bills today? Debt continues to balloon, jobs don't just appear and future stability is not on the horizon. If their own government is not planning for the future and isn't forward thinking, how can the youth of today be expected to look forward to the future? This brings us to the budget and brings us to the promise of public pensions in Ontario.

The members on the government side of this room groan and heckle when we talk about broken Liberal promises. Far be it from me to beat a dead horse—or in this case, beat a dead Trojan Horse—but the question must be asked for the sake of two thirds of Ontarians without a workplace pension. For people living in a never-ending cycle of financial struggle, for people who deserve and want stability in their retirement, and for people who want to one day be able to retire, the question is this: Will we ever even see this Ontario Retirement Pension Plan?

The NDP supports the idea of public pensions; that's why we proposed them. The government will inevitably parrot for four years that, since we didn't support the budget, we don't support pensions. That's nonsense. The NDP supports progressive, public programs.

We don't, however—and never will—support Harper-style pooled retirement pension plans, or PRPPs, that put banks ahead of people. It is concerning that the government is now apparently hawking bank products. Admittedly, I am a new MPP, but I was under the impression that we work for the people of Ontario and not for private financial institutions. PRPPs are not part of an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, they are financial products. I see the same green comfy chairs around this Legislature that everyone else does, but I don't get confused and see green TD Bank chairs. I see constituencies. This is the Ontario Legislature. People do not come here to withdraw funds, make deposits or purchase investments, but will they soon be able to buy PRPPs?

In all of the budget and pension talk, the government is selling the idea of an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan

to Ontarians. The comforting and progressive language we are all hearing from the government speaks to the need for stability and the ability to live with dignity into retirement. However, there has been quiet mention, almost as an aside, about giving Ontarians voluntary options. These voluntary add-ons—extra investment bank products—are not part of an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. They are favours for banks and investment companies which, incidentally, will be thrilled when Ontarians start putting their money into bank coffers instead of pensions. I'm not saying these aren't investments, but losing, on average, 20% to 30% due to fees over the life of the investment is not the kind of retirement security that Ontarians should be banking on when it comes to pensions.

In the budget, the Liberal government has promised an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan in 2017, which is three years from now. I would like to wonder aloud, if I may: I wonder if the PRPPs will be such a success for the government's financial partners and supporters that those institutions will push to keep them the only option. I wonder if the banks, which seem to have so much say in this plan, will say they don't want the government to implement the public part of the plan. The Ontario Retirement Pension Plan is going to be immensely complex, of course. I wonder, though, three years from now—and only one year before an election—if the Liberal government might hesitate to implement such a complex plan at the end of their reign. And I wonder if it wouldn't be a better idea to lead with the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. Perhaps once Ontarians are looked after, banks can sell their own products because by then Ontarians might be in a position to afford voluntary options.

I am pleased to serve Ontario as the NDP pension critic. I look forward to working to hold this Liberal government accountable when it comes to the future financial stability of workers and Ontarians across all of the constituencies represented by these comfy green chairs.

So many layers of this budget are hidden between positive, progressive language and early-phase spending. So many of those later-phase layers, however, are going to be do real damage to our programs, our services and our families across this province. This budget is not unlike an onion. The more layers we peel back, the more reason to cry.

Odds are that this budget will pass, and with it these two-tiered pension promises. If this government is truly committed to the idea of helping Ontarians plan for and afford their futures, if they truly believe in retirement security and stability, then they should lead with the public pensions and not with the Harper-style pooled retirement pension plans, which commit money and benefit to corporations and banks. As I've said before, banks and big business are doing just fine, and they are not planning to retire.

I hope we will see this government re-evaluate and re-prioritize its pension plan and prioritize Ontarians over financial institutions. I honestly hope we will actually see this public Ontario Retirement Pension Plan and not just

hear about it. I implore the government, please stop talking about bank products. Please don't start selling bank products. Please design and implement a progressive public pension plan for hard-working people across Ontario who deserve one.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Speaker, I want to share my time with the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane.

I want to start—and those that aren't playing with their BlackBerry can follow this—on the budget. The Ontario government committed to spending \$29 billion for public transit, highways, roads and bridges. What I'm concerned about in the budget is that it doesn't talk about things that are important in my riding. It doesn't talk about a year-round daily GO train to Niagara. Yet my good friend and colleague, from the Liberal Party, from St. Catharines, during the campaign, said, "I see it coming in 2015—St. Catharines to Niagara Falls." The MPP from St. Catharines said in a June 4 debate, "Make no mistake about it: The Welland Canal is not a problem. We've heard that for a number of years, but it's not. The canal can be accommodated and I'm committed to it and the government is committed to it in 2015." The problem that I have, Speaker: It's not in the budget.

When I take a look at what we can do with the \$29 billion—that's B for billion—the Canadian content requirement for manufacturers who want to bid on public transit contracts in Ontario is just 25%. Quebec requires a 60% domestic content plus assembly. The US, who really is part of our competition, have a 60% domestic content plus final assembly, and in the US, although it currently requires 60% local content, the Obama administration has proposed raising that to 100%. Now, think about what we could do in Ontario, if we did the same thing, on putting people back to work when we have one of the highest unemployment rates in the country.

Most trade agreements allow exemptions for government-financed infrastructural projects. There has to be an understanding, clearly, that if you're going to use Ontario tax dollars to fund projects, which I believe is a good idea, Ontario workers, businesses and contractors should be used before workers from another country. The Ontario government should take a look at their budget and commit to raising the domestic content law to 60% plus final assembly. That's what the Ontario government should do with this budget. We have to find a way to put people back to work right here in Ontario.

Now I'd like to talk about the horse racing industry and the Slots at Racetracks Program. This budget, surprisingly to me, doesn't do anything to help address this issue that has been hitting the horse racing industry for a number of years. The horse racing industry has been quite clear on what it needs to survive. The key word there is "survive." It needs the Slots at Racetracks Program to be reinstated. Tracks like Fort Erie, which is expecting—think about this—somewhere between 10,000 and 12,000 people to watch the running of the 79th

Prince of Wales race this Tuesday, rely on those slots. I invite my colleagues, Conservatives, Liberals, to come to Fort Erie; come on Tuesday. Come and see what Fort Erie has to offer. Come and see the opportunity that you could be part of and protecting, those 1,000 jobs. In Fort Erie, we don't have stores closed; we have plazas closed. We need that racetrack to survive. I believe that if my colleagues would come and see what it has to offer, you would be standing up here like I am, saying, "Let's find a way to keep it open and bring slots back."

The problem that we have in Fort Erie, in particular this year—and, again, it's not covered in the budget—is they've been forced to run on 37 race days. You cannot run on 37 days and keep it running. We cannot continue to put 1,000 jobs, both direct and indirect, in jeopardy. The budget can do something about it. We need the slots, and we need the racing schedule somewhere between 74 and 80 racing dates. Bring the slots back, and we can really start going forward again.

The other one I want to talk about is manufacturing. I've heard how we've lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs. But I want to be clear: Every country in the world is investing in manufacturing. When I hear about the budget, that you're looking at selling the GM shares, I believe you lose some of that control with General Motors. It wasn't just me up here standing and talking and saying, "This doesn't make sense to me." This afternoon I called the president of Unifor, Jerry Dias, who your party is familiar with. I said, "Is this a good idea?" He was very clear. Jerry said absolutely not do we want the government to sell those shares.

I would encourage my colleagues on the other side to pick up the phone, talk to the president of Unifor and say, "Is this a good idea?" Are you actually threatening good-paying jobs—that actually are well paid; they have benefits, and they have pensions—by selling those shares? I ask you to please give him a call. I did this afternoon.

Ontario has a lot to offer. In Ontario, we've got the type of highly skilled workforce these manufacturers are demanding. Just in General Motors in St. Catharines, when you talk about manufacturing, they've hired 150 new employees over the last few months. For the first time in 25 years, they are hiring students; they are hiring our children and our grandchildren. So why wouldn't we want to continue to fight for manufacturing jobs?

We have a manufacturer that's called SpencerARL, which I talked about in my by-election and I talked about in the general election. They've gone from 11 employees up to 300. Why did they come to Niagara? They came to Niagara because of the highly skilled workforce, because of the skilled trades that are in the Niagara region. Don't give up on manufacturing. We can do better. We can lead again in the province of Ontario when it comes to manufacturing.

On the LCBO, the words "downsize" and "consolidate"—it doesn't make sense to me, the budget plan to sell a wide range of public assets, including potentially—and I say "potentially," in fairness—the LCBO and the OPG. According to the LCBO's own website, the LCBO

delivered \$1.7 billion last year to the Ontario government. In 2010-11, it was \$1.5 billion. In 2011-12, it was \$1.63 billion. In 2012-13, it was \$1.7 billion. What do you see in those three years? The profits are growing. They're growing, and we want to sell it off.

The thing that you have to remember with the LCBO: That \$1.6 billion or \$1.7 billion is every year. Where does it go? What does it finance? This money goes to health care. This money goes to education. This money goes to infrastructure for the province. How can this be seen as anything but a fire sale of valuable public assets?

The LCBO employees—it's something that you should be interested in, and all of us should be in interested in. They're good-paying jobs and they're represented by OPSEU. Job losses from privatizing and contracting out mean one thing. Those workers who are out there working hard every day making a profit for the LCBO and, at the end of the day, for the province of Ontario, could lose their jobs. They could be forced into lower wages, less benefits. It makes no sense. And this budget doesn't contain labour law reform measures.

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The OLRA, the ESA etc.: There was no mention—and this is important—of any such changes about replacement workers in the province of Ontario in your budget. There is nothing about severance pay. When a company decides to get up and leave, and leave the workers without severance pay, there's nothing that protects that. They just leave, leave the workers behind and don't pay the workers. That's not in this budget. That makes no sense to me.

Let me talk about health care in my area. There is no mention of the new Niagara Falls hospital, which the province has awarded and committed to a \$26.2-million planning grant—which is good, because you've got to have some planning around a new hospital. But here's the problem that you've got with the hospital in Niagara Falls: The one in St. Catharines was a P3, a private-public partnership, and it was built at a cost of \$900 million, yet the same type of hospital, with the same number of beds and the same type of service, was built in Peterborough for about \$350 million, but it was publicly funded and publicly delivered. Now, wouldn't that make sense, if we have a deficit problem in the province of Ontario, to take a look at that model? I'm hoping that, during the transition period, we have the opportunity to say, "Let's take a look at that."

I listened today—very interesting—about parking fees in our hospitals, where there has been some conversation around reducing the cost. I raised this issue, by the way, in my by-election; I saw that you put it into your platform. But here's the problem that we have right now in the province of Ontario—and I have raised it with the health minister: What's happening in the P3s, which are run by a private company, is that they are taking some of the revenue away from parking. That is why you're seeing the prices go up. They're making money—the private company—on parking fees. It's not going into front-line health care workers or equipment like it used to be.

I've asked the health minister to look into that, because that's important.

The last one I want to talk about is schools, particularly in my area. I've got a school that has been scheduled to close. I took a very hard look at the budget, and I thought I was fair with the budget, but when I took a look at the budget, there was a line in there of \$750 million to consolidate schools or to close schools. But there isn't another line in there where you say, "We're going to give \$50 million or \$60 million to keep schools open," so that they can continue to be the hub of their community, where you can have not-for-profits come into the school. It has worked in the past; it can work again.

It says in the budget that you're committed to small community schools, and I really believe that that's the way to keep small schools open. Not-for-profits want to come to the schools. They want to partner with the school boards. They want to partner with the parents. It becomes the hub of the community, particularly in small communities. I wish that was in the budget. There's nothing in that. I would really like you to take a look at that.

I appreciate the time. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Timiskaming-Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: Before I begin my remarks, I would like to say that I would like to share my time with the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton.

It's always an honour to be able to stand in this House and represent the people who put us here. I'd like to start my remarks on this third reading of the budget talking about some of the people who put me here—talking about issues that they face, and some that aren't represented in this budget.

One is the cost of living, specifically in northern Ontario. We've got people in the country, but also we've got people in towns, whose only way to heat their house is electricity. I knocked on their doors and they showed me electricity bills over the last six or seven years. I've got seniors who are being forced out of their houses. They own their houses—they don't have mortgage payments; they've worked hard their whole lives. They're on fixed incomes. They're being forced out of their homes, but in my riding there's nowhere to go. That's not addressed here.

I'm not here just criticizing the government. That is a huge, huge problem. What am I supposed to say to those people? That's why I'm going to vote against this budget.

My dad always taught me that if you take care of the little things, the big things will fall into place. This budget is talking about the \$29-billion plans over 10 years and the \$2.5-billion job fund over 10 years, but it's not talking about what it's going to do for the people in Latchford with their electrical rates tomorrow.

I'm going to take a few issues from the budget. One other thing that my dad taught me—I didn't spend a lot of time on books for my education, but I paid very dearly for it. One thing he taught me is to look at what people do, not what they say, because it's easy to say things and not so easy to do them. One issue I'd like to take is the

Ring of Fire, because in northern Ontario it's very important to us. It's important to the province, but it's very important to northern Ontario. A lot of people like to say, "I've been to the Ring of Fire four times." I've been there once. I've heard today that the Ring of Fire is in the middle of nowhere. I take offence to that, because I live in northern Ontario and lots of people think I live in the middle of nowhere. There is no place in Ontario that is in the middle of nowhere, but the Ring of Fire is extremely hard to access.

I'll tell you a little story about my trip to the Ring of Fire. I was at Noront's base camp; I was in there in February. They had little wooden sidewalks going to each of the tents—to the mess tent and to the drilling. I asked, "What's the deal with the little sidewalks?" He says, "Well, this is February. You should come in June." There's no base at the Ring of Fire. It's not like the rest of northern Ontario. It's not like in Sudbury, where you can just build a railroad and build a road, because it's rock. It's not rock there; it's muskeg. It's going to take an inordinate amount of money and planning to get there. But we have to get there.

One thing that really bothers me about what the government continues to say about the Ring of Fire is that during the campaign, they committed \$1 billion no matter what—and you know, it might take that. Without the government leading the way, we're never going to get there. Yet in the budget, that \$1 billion is attached if the feds come in. You know what? There's a good chance we're never going to get there if we keep saying, "We'll do it if you do it." Once again, that's one of the reasons why I don't think we can trust this budget.

Another one: We've heard a lot about selling off assets. The government is looking at selling off assets. On page 164, they're going to tell you how they're going to do it. "To identify opportunities to optimize the full value and performance of these core assets, the government will launch an in-depth review process." That sounds wonderful, but the last time they tried to sell off assets—and we can disagree about the numbers, but with the ONTC divestment, and you can go to the Auditor General's report, they announced that they were going to save \$265 million, and they hadn't even cracked the books. They didn't know.

The last time you tried to sell off assets, you didn't even know what you were talking about. But this time, it's going to be "an in-depth review process." How are we supposed to know?

Hon. David Zimmer: Trust us; trust us.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes, trust you. But that's the problem. We're afraid that in a majority government it's going to become that much worse. That's why we're pushing so hard to get the Auditor General to be able to actually look at some of the things you're proposing. The ONTC is a good example. Once again—I've got to repeat this—in this House, it was announced that you were going to divest and it was going to save \$265 million. Later we found that when that announcement was made, no one had even looked at the books.

Hon. David Zimmer: That's not true.

Mr. John Vanthof: That is true. Those are the things, and that's why we are so worried about what's happening in this budget.

Something else: When the budget was announced, I got a call from one of my mayors. Right away he said, "You know what, John? We've disagreed on some things in the past, but this budget with the OMPF being cut again, small towns in northern Ontario"—and I don't know about the rest of the province because I don't I spend a lot of time in the rest of the province, but I spend a lot of time in my riding—

Interjections.

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Mr. John Vanthof: I spend a lot of time in my riding. OMPF funds cannot be cut because the balance—you keep talking about how you're taking back more responsibility—just doesn't work out.

My last point, and it's an important point for some towns in my riding—all talking about how we're going to spend more and we're going to make things—but, on page 169, it says that you are going to change the Power Dam Special Payment Program and claw back money and, in some cases, take towns' tax bases down by half. Those are the things that you're actually going to do right away, not the billion-dollar plans—you know, billions over 10 years. But what you're proposing to do in the next year or two, that's why we campaigned against this budget, and that's why I'm going to vote against this budget.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I have about 10 minutes so sit back and enjoy. I'm going to tell you why your budget has so many problems.

One of the first things, though, I have to be honest with you: I have to applaud you on your intentions, and I also have to applaud you on your messaging. Your messaging was phenomenal. You deserve a round of applause, and feel free at this point to insert a round of applause.

Applause.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Your messaging was phenomenal because you sold Ontario the fact that this budget—not the fact—you sold Ontario that this budget was the most progressive budget of all time. Well done.

Interjections.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: No, no. Seriously, well done. That was well done, but you didn't necessarily sell the truth. You sold a great message, though, and I applaud you for that great message. But let's dig a little bit deeper and actually get to what is really in your budget.

Off the top, if you say that there is no additional spending, that there's going to be no increases and there's going to be—for the budget of hospitals specifically: If hospital budgets are going to remain the same, remain flat for the next three years, given increased costs of inflation and increased costs in general, a flat budget for three years means cuts. Bottom line, it means cuts. If

you're talking about program spending that's going to stay the same for the next three years, if you're going to say that, then the truth is, that also means cuts.

But somehow—and this is the part that I give you a lot of credit for—by saying that your budget was progressive and that you're not going to cut, you somehow convinced people that you weren't going to cut, but we know the reality. In fact, what's so astonishing is, Don Drummond who is the economist that you hand-picked—you hand-picked Don Drummond; you asked him to give us a report on what we need to do to get our finances in place. The person that you hand-picked openly said on TVO's *The Agenda* with Steve Paikin—and I encourage you all to watch it. These are all archived. You can access it from the Internet. Don Drummond, your own hand-picked economist, said, "The Liberal plan, by 2017, I wouldn't be at all surprised if that involved the public sector about 100,000 lower." Wow. Your own economist says pretty much that you're going to cut 100,000 jobs by 2017—not my words, the words of your hand-picked economist.

Somehow magically, though—and I'm really impressed again by your messaging. When the Conservatives said it—and I think it was absolutely wrong. I think it's wrong to cut jobs—particularly our public sector. I think it's a very bad thing to do, given our precarious financial situation. But you've got to give a hand to the Conservatives. They went out and said it straight up, "We're going to cut 100,000 jobs," and the people of Ontario said, "That's not what we want. We don't like that," and they voted against them. Somehow you didn't say it, and your economist certainly says that it's going to happen by 2017, but somehow by not saying it, by saying that you have a progressive budget, you've hidden the truth and the reality that's there we'll see in a couple of years.

The reality is that your budget, which has been touted as a progressive budget, really is not; it's an austerity budget, and I'm not saying it alone. This is your own hand-picked economist. Not only did your hand-picked economist say it, but Bloomberg News says that literally this budget and this Liberal government are going to involve the biggest cuts since Harris. You've got to think about that for a second. How can the most progressive budget be affiliated with the biggest cuts since Harris? How do those two—I don't know. Maybe you can explain that to me in your responses. We're talking about, I'm hoping here, Michael Harris. I'm shocked.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Minister, fair warning.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I don't understand. Maybe you can explain. You'll have a couple of minute hits. Maybe you can explain to me, because maybe I'm missing something, but how is it possible—Don Drummond says that this is going to involve 100,000 cuts, and Bloomberg News says that this is going to be the biggest cuts since Harris. How is it possible that it can be called a progressive budget? I don't know. There's probably something I'm missing, and I encourage you to fill in the blanks.

Let's look at the priorities of this.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Well, the minister requested that I warn him officially. I warn you officially, then.

Hon. David Zimmer: Thank you, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): You're welcome.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Another thing that I think is phenomenal in terms of your messaging, and again I give you credit for this—this is a good skill and I hope to learn from this, but I'm hoping that I can back it up with some more substance. You've done a great job when you've talked about the Ontario pension plan.

Let's make it clear: great idea. We thought of this idea. We proposed it a number of years ago.

Applause.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you, thank you. But I also—

Applause.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you. I also applaud you for—I mean, ideas are free, right? You should take ideas if there's a good idea. If anyone comes up with an idea, I think there's nothing wrong with coming and saying, "Listen, that's a great idea. I'm going to implement it." There's nothing wrong with that. I think it's great that you've taken a great idea and you want to implement it.

But let's look at the truth of the budget. Let's look at the reality and the priorities. You went out messaging that you are going to bring in an Ontario pension plan. Good idea. I like it; it's a great idea. I support that.

Applause.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Yes, applaud. But if you're going to go out and message and say, "Listen, we're bringing in a made-in-Ontario pension plan, but"—there's a big "but" here—"we're not going to implement it or really do anything for it until 2017. But this year, 2014, we're going to bring in the PRPP, the private retirement pension plan," it speaks against your priorities. You're going to immediately implement a Harper-style financial tool that makes people susceptible or vulnerable to the markets. You're going to implement that right away. But the pension plan that you talked about, saying, "We're going to bring in this pension plan. We're fighting for this pension plan," is something that you've pushed off three or maybe four years into the future.

Now, in terms of the messaging, you did a great job. People thought, "Hey, the Liberals are here for the pension plan for Ontarians. We love that idea." But let's scratch beneath the surface. What are your priorities? You're immediately moving on a Harper-style pension plan, which is essentially a banking tool or an ability to invest in a way that will benefit the banks, for sure. But in terms of priorities, are you moving in a way that shows that you're really prioritizing a pension plan for the working people of Ontario, or are you moving very

quickly to implement a plan that's going to benefit the banks of Ontario?

When you dig deeper into this budget and you look at the reality, it sounded really good—and I agree with you, it sounds great—but in reality, I'm going to ask the viewers to make up their own mind. They've already made up their mind, and hopefully they have another four years to reconsider that. I respect their decision, but—

Hon. David Zimmer: Four more years.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Four more years, absolutely. But think about it: If you're going to message a pension plan and say that's one of the hallmarks of your budget, but you're not going to even really implement anything of any note until three or four years down the road, but you're immediately implementing this other style of pension, it really speaks to the real priorities of this government.

Now the selling of assets: This question was posed a number of times, and let's get to the bottom of this, because this is something that I think a lot of people are confused by. I myself was quite confused by it, because on one hand it says very clearly in the budget—and my colleague listed it off—that you're going to look at maximizing the value and unlocking the full value from government assets. It sounds pretty cool. It sounds like you're going to do something good.

Interjections.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: No, it sounds good, right? It sounds great. But what does "unlocking the full value" really mean? It's a great way of saying, "We may sell it; we may not sell it." What does "maximizing value" mean? Well, to maximize the value of something, you may sell something to maximize its value, you may re-finance it in some way to maximize its value. It basically opens up the door to do whatever you want.

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Rightly so, as opposition members, we say, "All right, you're proposing to maximize value and unlock the full value." You listed the three assets: Ontario Power Generation, the Liquor Control Board of Ontario and Hydro One. Are you going to sell it? Are you going to sell it or not? What are you going to do?

Anyway, please stay tuned for the next instalment. I hope you enjoyed it so far. It has been a pleasure. Thank you for having me. Thank you all.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

JURY SELECTION

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member for Kenora—Rainy River has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given on July 22,

2014, by the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or parliamentary assistant has five minutes to reply.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Yesterday in question period, I asked this government if it will finally take action to address the systemic issues with jury selection the coroner cited as preventing a public inquest from going forward and call an inquest into the deaths of the seven youths who died while going to high school in Thunder Bay right away. We are here to debate this issue at length this evening because the answer I received from both the Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs and Children and Youth Services were unsatisfactory.

Before I talk about the unsatisfactory response to this very important issue, I want to first take a moment to bring people up to speed on the issue itself. Over the past 10-plus years, seven students have died while far away from home attending high school in Thunder Bay. These youths left from their six separate communities, northern reserves, to access education and earn their high school diploma. Far from home and far from their friends and families, these young people suffered tragic deaths that have now been termed “mysterious circumstances.” The families and communities of these children have been waiting for years with unanswered questions as to what happened to their child and why. Investigating and finding the cause is important for two main reasons: to provide closure to these families and also to prevent future deaths.

In September 2011, NAN, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, and Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto called on the Ontario government to convene a commission of inquiry into these seven deaths. In response, the chief coroner made the decision to direct a joint inquest. At that time, assurances were made that the review and inquest would happen in an expeditious manner. But three years later, it appears that no progress has been made. Just last week, the chief coroner announced that the inquest that was scheduled to commence this fall in Thunder Bay was not going to go forward due to the under-representation of First Nations people on jury rolls, a long-standing issue examined by the Honourable Frank Iacobucci in his February 2013 independent review.

There are essentially two main issues that I raised in my question, the first being getting answers for the families, communities and all northerners who have been waiting, whether this takes the form of a coroner's inquest or a public inquiry. Yesterday, in response to my question, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs said the coroner “has adjourned the inquest so that he can make arrangements to perhaps work with some of the recommendations in the Iacobucci report.” But when speaking with the coroner's office, we learned specifically that the inquest is to be announced and that the coroner's inquest has not yet started. The only action the coroner has taken toward this inquest was a pre-inquest hearing to establish standing, not the start of an inquest. In other words, an inquest that hasn't convened cannot be adjourned. The minister's answer is false and misleading.

The fact that the coroner's inquest hasn't yet commenced shouldn't preclude us from pursuing answers to—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): You can't do that. The member from Kenora—Rainy River will remove that comment.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I withdraw.

The fact that the coroner's inquest, though, hasn't yet commenced shouldn't preclude us from pursuing answers through the creation of a public inquiry. I cannot stress it enough that families, communities and all northerners need insight into these deaths; we need it quickly so that we can make the necessary changes to prevent further deaths from occurring. This is a public safety issue.

The second issue that needs to be addressed is the larger issue of First Nations representation on juries. This is key to many proceedings in Ontario. Right now, there are other coroners' inquests that are put on hold because of the underrepresentation of First Nations on juries, and criminal matters are also being affected.

In a recent case, a manslaughter conviction of a Grassy Narrows man was overturned by the Supreme Court of Canada due to the under-representation of reserve community members on Kenora's jury roll. This begs the question of why and how it is acceptable for the Attorney General to continue to convene criminal cases in the north using the same jury roll when the coroner cannot. How is justice served in these criminal matters, but not in other investigative matters?

The answer is, justice is not being served, and this government knows it. It has been aware of this issue for years, and it is beyond time for it to start taking steps to improve access to justice for First Nations people across this province.

The fact is that the inquest hasn't even started and it's being referred to as a gross breach of trust in failing to deliver on this important promise. So I want to reiterate that there are many groups calling for this show to get on the road, and it is incumbent upon this minister to take those steps and do so quickly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs has five minutes.

Hon. David Zimmer: Thank you once again to the member opposite for raising this important issue.

At about this time last year, I was in Thunder Bay, where I had an opportunity to meet with the parents of the students who were murdered. I remain deeply sympathetic to the families of the students, and this government recognizes that they deserve the utmost respect throughout this process.

The Thunder Bay inquest was announced in August 2012. While no formal date was identified for the inquest to begin, discussions had occurred initially for the inquest to start in the spring of 2014. Given the complexity of the case and the volume of materials, the projected start time was changed to the fall of 2014 without a specific set date. However, as you are aware, the Office of the Chief Coroner, which operates at arm's length from the ministry and the government, has determined that the 2014

Thunder Bay jury roll is not representative, and it will not be proceeding with inquests that involve aboriginal community members in the Thunder Bay and Kenora districts for the remainder of 2014.

I understand that the coroner's counsel had committed to the participants that the inquest materials, or the brief, would be available no later than October 31, 2014, and that the inquest would be rescheduled. An evaluation of Thunder Bay's 2015 jury roll will be undertaken by the Ministry of the Attorney General, the Office of the Chief Coroner and First Nation groups to determine if the issues and concerns regarding aboriginal representation have been resolved.

Speaker, the decision of the chief coroner to postpone this particular inquest is outside the scope of my mandate. Any further questions about the Office of the Chief Coroner's decision should be directed to my colleague at the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. However, in general, I can tell you that our ministry is committed to working with the Ministry of the Attorney General to support its work on including individuals living in First Nation communities on Ontario's jury rolls.

Juries are one of the cornerstones of the justice system. It is important that they reflect all elements of society, including First Nations. That's why our government commissioned Mr. Justice Iacobucci to do a review in 2011. His review undertook an examination of the existing process in the selection of jury rolls, held consultations with First Nations stakeholders, and evaluated best practices from Ontario and other jurisdictions. As recommended in the Iacobucci report, the only approach that will produce enduring results is a collaborative process between government and our First Nation partners.

Consistent with that advice, in February 2013, the Attorney General and I were pleased to announce the creation of an implementation committee and an advisory committee in response to Iacobucci's two threshold recommendations.

The 11-member juries review implementation committee is composed of a substantial First Nations membership. Led by co-chairs Nishnawbe Aski Nation Deputy Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler and Assistant Deputy Attorney General Irvin Glasberg, the committee also includes current and former judges, lawyers and policy-makers, providing a wide range of perspectives across the justice sector.

We have also announced the co-chairs of the Aboriginal Justice Advisory Group, which will provide the Attorney General with advice on the broader justice issues affecting First Nations.

Furthermore, the Ministry of the Attorney General is creating a new position, the assistant deputy Attorney General, who would be dedicated to addressing aboriginal issues. The new assistant deputy Attorney General, aboriginal issues, will, in collaboration with aboriginal peoples, lead the development of new programs and services for aboriginal peoples involved in the criminal justice system.

Mr. Speaker, our government is taking meaningful steps towards effecting a real, positive change in the way First Nations people participate in Ontario's justice system, specifically in enhancing their participation on juries. My colleague the Attorney General and I and this government will continue to move forward in implementing the recommendations of the Iacobucci report and we will continue to work to ensure that First Nations are adequately represented in the Ontario justice system.

Mr. Speaker, may I just correct my record. I used the expression "murdered." I should have used the expression students "passed away." That finding of "murdered" has not been found yet, so I ask to correct my record in that regard. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. This House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1811.

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Harinder Malhi, Cristina Martins
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of Ontario**

First Session, 41st Parliament

**Assemblée législative
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Première session, 41^e législature

**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 24 July 2014

Jeudi 24 juillet 2014



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 24 July 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 24 juillet 2014

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.
Prayers.

MEMBERS' EXPENDITURES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table the individual members' expenses for the fiscal year 2013-14. Members will find copies in their desks.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUILDING OPPORTUNITY AND SECURING OUR FUTURE ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2014

LOI DE 2014 OUVRANT DES PERSPECTIVES ET ASSURANT NOTRE AVENIR (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Resuming the debate adjourned on July 23, 2014, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 14, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts / *Projet de loi 14, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: As I was saying yesterday, one of the things that the budget talks about, very clearly laid out in the 2014 Ontario budget—and I'm going to quote from it. The budget indicates that they're going to "maximize" value and are going to be "unlocking" the full value from government assets. The assets are listed: Ontario Power Generation, the Liquor Control Board and Hydro One. Listen, we've asked continually, what does that mean when you say things like "maximizing value," when you say things like "unlocking the full value"? What does that mean? As part of our responsibility, we want to know what the government is going to do, so that the people of Ontario know what's going on. So when we hear this language, "maximizing value," does that mean you're going to sell these assets to maximize value? Does that mean you're going to rent it out? Does that mean you're going to come up with some other creative financial tool to get value out of this? What does that

mean? That's why we asked the question repeatedly: Are you going to sell off these public assets?

We haven't received a straight answer, and this goes back to my initial point: You had great messaging—and we have to commend you on your messaging—but when you scratch beneath the surface of that messaging, what's the real substance there?

One of our issues is that you talk about and touted your budget as the most progressive budget ever, but how can you have a progressive budget on one hand, when you speak about potentially privatizing or selling off public assets that are revenue-generating? How can you have a progressive budget when your own hand-picked economist talks about the fact that this is going to result, by 2017, in 100,000 job losses in the public sector? That's your own economist saying that; that's not us. We're curious. How can these things all be true at the same time that this is a progressive budget?

As Bloomberg News says, this Liberal government budget will result in the "Biggest ... Cuts Since Harris." How does that add up with, again, calling this budget the most progressive budget ever?

Let's talk about some of the other issues that come up in this budget and how, again, they are problematic and how they raise questions around, is this budget really a progressive budget or is it really an austerity budget?

One of the things that I've learned, and I ask you all to consider this: If you do the same thing and you get a certain result, and you do that again and again—you do something, you get a certain result; you do something, you get a certain result—if you think doing that exact same thing again and again is going to give you a different result, that, to me, is absolutely unreasonable.

One of the things we've seen for the past 10 years is this theory that simply giving away corporate tax breaks is going to somehow result in jobs. We've seen that. This is not a new idea. We've seen that being tried here in Ontario for the past 10 years. Cutting corporate taxes, no-strings-attached policies, does not result in job creation. The evidence is there, and in my life, I can say that the decisions I've made that have been based on evidence, that have been based on rational thinking, have been far better than the decisions that I've made based on my emotional or irrational thinking.

So I ask you, as the government, to consider how the \$2.5-billion Jobs and Prosperity Fund, which is essentially a fund of money given to corporations to encourage business but with no strings attached—how is that going to change from the past? We've seen that giving money to a corporation without any strings attached doesn't result

in job creation, so using this same plan that hasn't worked before—I'm very skeptical that somehow it's going to work now. So I question that in the budget.

Something that has come up time and time again, and it's an issue that impacts not only people in their homes, but also impacts people in terms of manufacturing and other jobs, is the fact that energy costs are rising. The reality is that, as energy costs rise, it puts a burden on families, because they have a difficult time paying their hydro bills. As the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane noted, when folks who live in northern parts of Ontario use electricity as their primary source of heating, that cost is prohibitively high, and it's putting people in a very difficult position. On top of that, businesses rely on energy to be able to run their factories and their industry, and if the costs are so high, it's going to create a deterrent for those businesses. So, again, what is this budget doing to address that very crucial issue which would impact day-to-day family households as well as businesses? There's really nothing of substance with regard to energy in this budget.

Post-secondary education: My riding has a particularly large population or proportion of youth. Students who are seeking to get a university education, a post-secondary education, want to get this education as a means of bettering their lives. Now, the reality is, there are very talented young people out there who are discouraged from going to university because the costs are so high, because the tuition fees are so high, and this is something we shouldn't be proud of, but another highest or first that we have is that we pay the highest rates of tuition in the entire country. We also contribute or invest the least in terms of dollars on a per capita basis in our post-secondary education.

In this budget, the government is proposing to continue the 30% grant. Now, a 30% grant sounds like a great idea, of course. You're giving a grant to students to make their tuition fees more affordable. It sounds good on the surface, of course, but let's scratch a little deeper. Tuition fees have gone up year over year. If tuition fees continue to increase—I'll give you a little simple example. If tuition fees are really, really, really expensive and you give a 30% grant, they're still really, really expensive. So a 30% grant after a number of years is going to have no impact, because if tuition fees are going to become so expensive, a 30% grant off of a colossal amount is still a pretty colossal amount. So it's not going to benefit students.

What we proposed was the idea of freezing tuition fees. Now, the jurisdictions that have the lowest tuition fees in Canada are jurisdictions that have frozen tuition fees. Newfoundland has done so and Quebec has done so. If you were serious about improving the situation for post-secondary education, if you really wanted to make post-secondary education more affordable, then you would implement a tuition freeze, not a 30% grant, given the fact that tuition fees are going to increase year after year.

0910

Transit: I have to give you so much credit for your messaging on transit. Somehow, you sold such a phe-

nomenal message on transit that people have bought it. I applaud you for your message: Your message is phenomenal. But is the substance phenomenal? I question that. I think your messaging was great. You won over the public, and I applaud you for that: great job. But let's look at the substance. We're in 2014, the last time I checked. Am I right? This is the year 2014. What jurisdiction, what country in the world in 2014 is investing in diesel trains as their route to take a city into a modern direction? What jurisdiction in 2014 is saying, "Okay, our solution to connecting our airport to our downtown core is to build a dirty diesel train. That's our new, modern innovation?" That's not the direction that we should be heading in in 2014. If this was a hundred years ago, a salute to you; sure, we could do diesel trains. But in this time and age, why are you investing in a diesel train?

And on top of that, the air-rail link—there are no stops planned. This could be a great alternative route for people to be able to get into the city. This could be a great route to take them off of the roads and the highways. This could be a great way to reduce gridlock and free up congestion. But instead of using this air-rail link as a great alternative form to get into the city and allow for multiple stops, you're building a dirty diesel train going through vibrant communities, not offering any stops. Just a link straight from the airport to the downtown core, with nothing stopping in between, seems absolutely irrational. I'm sure the voters and the people of Ontario, when they look a little deeper, will start to wonder, "What is this all about? Why are they not electrifying this train and why aren't there any stops so we can actually make use of this?"

Now, I talked about priorities yesterday, and in your transit plan you talk about a number of things. Again, the messaging was phenomenal, but there is an important thing here: We have to prioritize. Certain things have to be done before others. In the budget it talks about a number of things and gives them all equal priority. We know in downtown Toronto—anyone who's taken the main downtown line—that first and foremost we need a downtown relief line. That's something we need right away. But the fact that your plan doesn't differentiate between a downtown relief and a Yonge extension to the north shows how little you prioritize the real concerns and needs of the people of Ontario, and particularly the people in Toronto. If you have an already overburdened, overflowing downtown line and you add an extension to that, you're only going to overburden that already congested line and create a bigger problem. The solution has to be that there's got to be a prioritizing of making a downtown relief line first, and then you can consider extensions. But the fact is that this budget doesn't say that; this budget doesn't clarify that we need to build this first. It just broadly says, "We're going to do a number of things, including an extension, including a relief line." That does not make sense. Again, your messaging was phenomenal, but your substance lacks a lot.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's like they talk like New Democrats in an election and then they govern like Tories.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: That's a great point, actually, that the member from Timmins—James Bay mentions: You talk like the NDP but you govern like the Conservatives.

Another really major priority that we know a number of people in Ontario are facing—and the reality is that this is another first or another “highest” that you've achieved under the Liberal government—is that we're paying the highest auto insurance in the country.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: They're first at something.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: They're first at a lot of things: the highest tuition fees, the highest energy costs and the highest auto insurance. So you're hitting a lot of highs—probably not the right type of highs, but you're certainly hitting a number of highs.

Now, with auto insurance, I look at the plan that's in the budget. There's essentially no new plan; it's a reiteration of what you previously have tried before. Here's my concern: I mentioned earlier that if you do the same thing and you get the same outcome, if you all of a sudden think that doing the same thing is going to give you a different outcome, there's a serious problem in your thinking.

The reason I bring this up is that in 2010, this government said, “Listen, we understand that the auto insurance rates are too high. We understand; we get it,” which I applaud you for. I'm happy you understood that that was a problem. So in 2010, the Minister of Finance at the time said, “Listen, I get it. The auto insurance rates are too high. We need to bring them down. We need to get them under control.” Great. He said, “Well, to get them down”—this sounds very familiar, so pay attention—“we need to reduce the costs. We need to take costs out of the system.” Okay. Costs for who? “Well, costs for the insurance companies. We need to bring their costs down. If it's less costly for insurance companies, then the trickle-down effect will mean the premiums will go down.” Okay. I see the logic there. You're thinking that if you reduce the cost for the insurance companies, then the premiums will come down. Okay. So what did you do? In 2010, you implemented changes that slashed—and when I use the word “slashed,” this is modest; I think it's worse than slashed—benefits that the drivers receive if, God forbid, someone gets in an accident. The statutory accident benefits were slashed. Caps were put in place.

These caps, this slashing of benefits, resulted in—what do you think? A 10% reduction in costs? A 20% reduction in costs? No. A 30% reduction in costs? No. A 50% reduction in the cost for statutory accident benefit payouts. Putting it bluntly, the insurance companies paid out 50% less than they had had to before to Ontario consumers who had auto insurance—50% less.

Imagine you ran a business. I'm sure there's lots of business people here. You run a business, and overnight, your main cost in your business—if it's a restaurant, your food; if you have an eyeglass company, your eyeglasses; if you're running a major manufacturing industry or a major factory, your hydro bill—is cut by 50%. How would that impact your profit margin? Think about it. Your major cost is reduced by 50%, and it's reduced by

70% in the GTA—a 70% cost reduction. So the costs certainly came down. Well done, finance minister. You did your job; you got the costs down.

But now the big question: What do you think happened to the auto insurance rates? The costs went down for insurance companies by 50%. That's a huge cost reduction. That's massive. In fact, it's one of the most historically significant cost reductions in the history of the auto insurance market in Ontario—a 50% cost reduction in one year, from 2010 to 2011.

Guess what happened to the auto insurance premiums. Did they go down? No. Funnily enough, they went up by 5%. They went up by 5%. From 2010 to after 2011, they went up by 5%. Please explain that to me. How is that possible, that you give the auto insurance industry a 50% cost reduction and the premiums went up by 5%? I tell you, if you don't have the will to ensure the rates go down, you can cut the costs as much as you want for the auto insurance industry and they won't bring down premiums. There have to be some strong measures taken by the government.

The government has made auto insurance mandatory legally. The government also has the responsibility to make sure that auto insurance is affordable. If you make it mandatory, if it's legally mandatory to insure your vehicle, then it has to be the responsibility of the government to also make it affordable.

The steps that have been taken so far have certainly benefited the auto insurance industry. And the steps that you're proposing again—reducing the interest rates for settlements, taking it down from 5% to 1.3% so that insurance companies don't have to pay as much, getting rid of the right to sue—all these things will benefit the auto insurance industry, but will they ensure that our premiums go down? I think not.

This speaks to the budget, the fact that on the surface the messaging sounds good, but when you dig deeper the substance is not there.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm very pleased to have this opportunity to respond to the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton on his presentation on this budget bill. I think it's important to point out, again, some of the facts relating to the budget, some of the key numbers that have been discussed over the course of the debate on the budget motion, as well as the debate on the budget bill itself.

0920

This budget shows a deficit this year of \$12.5 billion. It's up from last year. It shows an accumulated debt of \$289 billion, if I'm not mistaken, again, up by about \$20 billion year over year. It shows interest costs on the debt of about \$11 billion a year this year. Mr. Speaker, as we know, this is the third-largest item in the budget after only health and education. It is actually the fastest-growing single line item in the budget. It's expected that the interest costs will increase by about 8% a year over

the foreseeable future. Clearly, this is a huge concern of our caucus.

It's a huge concern in my riding. The people of Wellington-Halton Hills are very concerned about the growth in government spending and, really, the accelerated government spending not just this year, but over the last number of years, going back to 2003. We know that as government spending has increased dramatically, people have not yet seen a dramatic increase in the quality of public services. In fact, we question very much if we're getting good value for the taxpayer's dollar, and of course, we've seen tax increases in this budget, too. That is a concern to our caucus and to a great many people across the province of Ontario.

I think the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton represented his constituents well with his speech, but we all need to continue to focus on these big spending issues and the deficit and debt issues that have been raised over the course of the debate by our caucus. We challenge the government to do more to control government spending and to create jobs in the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's always a pleasure being in the House when my colleague from Bramalea-Gore-Malton speaks. He has such a way of articulating some of the issues and concerns that came up through this budget.

A lot of them resonate. The member comes from the Toronto area, but for myself as a northern member, a lot of the issues that he brought up are very much close to home for me, particularly some of the points that he brought up on auto insurance, on the hydro issues and on jobs. All of these measures are affordability measures. While I was knocking on doors in the recent election, they were the primary issues that I was hearing on every doorstep—particularly hydro—from businesses, from everyday, average people, from home owners, from seniors, from people on fixed incomes. They're finding it hard. They understand the fact that, not only in their household budgets, but in order for them to move forward—they get the fact that hydro needs to come under control, particularly when it comes to developing opportunities for jobs and businesses.

I've seen so many good manufacturing jobs disappear from Algoma-Manitoulin. It is frustrating to see. I'm a statistic of those losses. I came from the forest industry. I came from an area where we had a vibrant local of about 3,800 members. Within six months, we dropped down to 600 members.

So the issues that he brings forward are not just from the Toronto area; they are across this province. If we do not get the biggest question—and the thing we need to tackle is getting our energy under control and developing the right policies for this province—we're in very deep trouble.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Han Dong: I would like to thank the member across for his comments. He questioned maximizing value for public assets. I think as a government, it's a very

responsible way to know how much your assets are worth. We are put in power to manage public assets, so we've got to know how much those assets are worth. If I was running a company, a small business, I'd need to know how much my small business is worth and how much revenue it's generating. I think it makes a lot of sense for us to know that.

He talked about whether or not this is a progressive budget. I think it's pretty obvious. On June 12, people decided this budget is worth their support.

We talk about the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. That's something that many governments have talked about, or discussed, in the past, but this Premier is actually taking the opportunity to execute on that.

We talked about transit. Transit is probably one of the top priorities of this budget. Living in a riding where I see congestion every day, I'm hungry for some sort of solution, and I think this budget addresses that.

Electrifying trains: We've got to start somewhere. The air-rail link connecting Union to Pearson is going to relieve the congestion on our highways. It's going to be ready for the Pan Am Games. I think that's very, very important, because next year, we're going to see a lot of tourists coming to Toronto. It's fantastic. It's the biggest sporting event this country has ever seen, so we have to have the infrastructure ready to transport these people. I think it makes a lot of sense to have this air-rail link and electrifying it as we go.

We talked about building a transit network. This is something I hope the member across will support, because we're really putting our money where our mouth is.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I thought it was an interesting contrast that the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton made in regard to talking about—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm still choking over all the diesel.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Exactly. We're going to be choked on the diesel that comes down that line, and the member from Trinity-Spadina thinks it's a good thing. I remember the former member from Trinity-Spadina: He would never have taken that position.

But, anyway, I thought he had a very interesting contrast when he talked about—you know, pretty good on the communications side. They did a pretty good job, those Liberals, going out there trying to portray this as the great progressive budget, the best progressive budget in the history of the universe. I think they did a pretty good job of that. But, as we start to peel back the onion, as they say, and you look at really what is in that budget, you're finding out that it's not as progressive as they make it out to be.

I just heard Liberal members get up and talk about the virtues of privatization. Since when did privatizing public

assets become a progressive move? It, quite frankly, is the opposite of that.

I also know, because the member has raised it in his debate, that Mr. Drummond—do you remember Mr. Drummond, that wonderful right-wing guy who was hired by the Liberals in order to write, essentially, a Conservative budget but call it progressive?—said himself, “Listen, you follow this budget plan, and there’s going to be 100,000 less working in the civil service of Ontario at the end of the process.” I heard; I was in that election. I remember the Premier, Madam Wynne, was running around saying, “Oh, Tim Hudak—he wants to get rid of 100,000 jobs. That’s terrible. We would never do that.” But even Mr. Drummond admits that the government’s own document, their own progressive budget document that they say is so great, actually is going to lead to pretty severe job losses in the province of Ontario.

So I think you did a very good job of portraying and talking about the contrast between the communications spin and what exactly is inside that budget. What you’ve really got here is a Trojan Horse budget.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, you have two minutes.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: What I had hoped to do is just point out some of the inconsistencies in the budget and how on one hand calling it a progressive budget and on the other hand looking at the priorities—they don’t add up.

One of the important things is the pension plan. I just want to reiterate this point. They talk about a pension plan, which is a great idea, and it’s a great message. You went out to the public saying, “Listen, we want to bring in a pension plan.” But what are you actually bringing in? You’re immediately bringing in a PRPP, which is a pooled retirement pension plan. You’re immediately bringing that in right now. In 2014, you’re bringing that in, which is going to benefit banks, which is a private pooled retirement fund based on market volatility, which puts people’s retirements at the risk and at the mercy of the market. That’s what you’re doing right away. And the plan that you talked about so much—you’re not even going to scratch the surface of that plan. You may introduce that plan about three or four years down the road. So you did a great job of messaging and making it sound like, “Hey, we’re going to work on this pension,” but, really, what are you doing? Your priorities are very different.

0930

That’s what I want to raise: that, on one hand, talking about a progressive budget is not really a progressive budget if you just talk about it and the substance to it. Having freezes on budgets for hospitals is essentially a cut. You’re cutting services, and it’s going to cut jobs, which is fine if that’s what you openly say. If you say, “Hey, we’re going to cut jobs,” that’s fine. But my problem is that you called it progressive, and it’s not progressive when you’re actually doing cuts. If you look at the details of it, it looks more like an austerity budget.

One of the last things I want to end off with is that there are a lot of commitments that you’ve made in this budget, and I’m hoping you’re going to follow through on these commitments. One of those commitments, which is important to my riding and particularly to many constituents across Ontario, is the commitment to transit, and one in particular: all-day two-way GO to the Kitchener line. That would benefit Brampton; that would benefit many people. Electrifying the GO would benefit many people. Please do it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. John Yakabuski: It’s a pleasure to join the debate this morning. I want to begin, initially, by speaking to the member from Trinity–Spadina, who was talking about how the Pan Am Games are going to be the biggest sporting event in this country’s history. Liberals have a lot of fun with numbers, and they spin things in a lot of ways. But to try to spin this event as being bigger than the 1976 Summer Olympics or the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary or the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver is just absolutely ridiculous. Ask the television networks how much they’re willing to bid on it. Ask the advertisers how much they’re willing to pay for 30 seconds to get on television for the exposure. They’ll tell you what the biggest games are. But you guys, you’re all sold on these Pan Am Games because you’ve already made such a mess of them.

But I’m going to get back to the budget. Because you know me, Speaker: I am always on topic.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I’m listening.

Mr. John Yakabuski: So the budget, 2014: The government thinks that somehow—and congratulations. You won the election. I’ve heard enough already, okay? But the election was no embracement of your budget—not at all. You think that somehow everything you’ve done has been vindicated by the election of June 12. This budget was never approved by the people of Ontario. They’re very concerned about it.

You know, every time I read a story about Charles Sousa, the Minister of Finance, speaking somewhere about this budget and about the fiscal plan for Ontario put forth by the Liberals here, I can’t help but think of a pretzel.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Can I have a little bit of quiet on the right side here? Because I’m having difficulty hearing the speaker.

Continue.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I’m sure what you meant, Speaker, was a little quiet on the wrong side, but I understand.

Anyway, all I can think of is this gigantic pretzel, because every time Charles Sousa speaks on the budget, he is twisting himself each and every way about where this government’s going with the fiscal plan.

You know, there was a good editorial in the Ottawa Sun on the weekend.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakubuski: Now the member wants to run down the good members of our press. Shame on him. My goodness gracious, they're professional people. You should try and act that way too.

Now, here's a couple of the things that were written:

"There are skeptics because of what Sousa himself told the Legislature in his fall economic statement on November 7, 2013, just eight months ago:

"Back then, Sousa said: 'Mr. Speaker, we will continue to make new strategic investments to spur growth, create jobs, strengthen services and help families. We are on track to balance the budget by 2017-18. However, should global economic conditions falter, causing revenue growth to fall further, our priority is clear—this government will continue to protect investments in jobs and families ahead of short-term (deficit) targets.'

"Translation: If push comes to shove we'll blow the deficit in favour of spending, hardly comforting given that Sousa also said provincial revenues were already more than \$5 billion lower than the Liberals projected in 2010.

"But, again, that wasn't what Sousa said just six months prior to his fall economic statement"—

Mr. Bob Delaney: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Stop the clock. Point of order.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Speaker, on three occasions, the member has referred to the Minister of Finance by something other than his ministerial title or his riding name.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I recognize that, but I thought he was reading from an article, so I did forgive him for that.

Mr. John Yakubuski: I am, Speaker, and if he had spoken up earlier, he would have recognized that too.

"But, again, that wasn't what Sousa"—you know who he is, Bob—"said just six months prior to his"—

Hon. Mario Sergio: Come on, you know better than that.

Mr. John Yakubuski: He knows better than that, too.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would ask the speaker, once again, if he would respect the other members of the Legislature and refer to them by their title.

Mr. John Yakubuski: Absolutely—"just six months prior to his fall economic statement when, in his May 2, 2013, budget speech, he said: 'Mr. Speaker ... our government is absolutely committed to eliminating the deficit by 2017-18 ... and then reducing the net debt-to-GDP ratio to the pre-recession level of 27%.... We will not shift the burden of debt to future generations, nor will we ignore the responsibilities we face today.... Mr. Speaker, let me make it clear: Our government believes eliminating the deficit is the single most important step we can take to grow the economy and create jobs. Eliminating the deficit makes resources available for strategic investments that will boost economic growth that leads to job creation.'

"But if Sousa"—because it's written right here—"believed that, why did his 2013 budget increase the \$9.8-billion deficit the Liberals inherited from Dalton

McGuinty to \$11.3 billion (a hike of 15%) and why did his 2014 budget increase it another 10.6% to a predicted \$12.5 billion this year?"

Well, I'm not going to read the whole article—because I want to have time for my own words and I know they appreciate them over there—but what it indicates is that you get a conflicting message from the Minister of Finance every time he opens his mouth. The reason why is because they have absolutely no idea how they're going to get to a balanced budget by 2017-18. It's a different word every day. It keeps everybody out there confused. It keeps people wondering, "Oh yes, I just heard the finance minister say today they're committed to eliminating the deficit," or, "Oh, I just heard the finance minister say, 'Don't worry about job creation and investments in Ontario. We're not going to let short-term goals get in the way of our long-term goal of what is building Ontario into that province of opportunity.'" Once again, I'm just paraphrasing.

There's no clear message because there is no plan. If Charles Sousa, the Minister of Finance, had a plan he would at least be able to stick to it, but they have no idea how they're going to get there.

That is what is really dangerous for people here in the province of Ontario—really dangerous—because we just saw where the Amalgamated Transit Union received an 8-point-something per cent increase over four years to their wages, when the President of the Treasury Board said that there is no money out there for wage increases. That's one group, and you know that the pressure is going to be exerted much more strongly from all other public sector groups to say, "Hey, sauce for the goose, sauce for the gander; we want our little cut of that as well."

I'm a little confused. If there's this much money—because she said, "Oh no, they're going to have to get that money from other parts of the revenue stream over at the TTC." Is there that much money being wasted that they can find that somewhere else? Is that going to be the narrative right across the government when they get into negotiations here later this year and into the fall, when they get into negotiations with public sector unions about new contracts? Are they going to say, "Oh, well, we found money for wage increases because it was found somewhere else"? What does that say about the management of the whole budget in general? If you can find the money to pay out huge wage increases, you must have waste somewhere else. It just doesn't happen. There is no money tree. I know that's hard for the Liberals to believe and it's hard for them to accept, that somehow behind the Ministry of Finance building there isn't this money tree that just keeps growing and growing and sprouting more billion-dollar bills for the Ontario government to waste. That's not going to happen.

So how are they going to get there if they keep doing this? They say, "Well, we're going to draw the line." I've been at the finance committee hearings on repeated occasions. I have never had a deputation at a finance committee hearing—the pre-budget hearings are the ones I'm talking. I have never had anybody come to those hearings

and say to the government, "You're spending too much money. I really think you need to cut back. There are no good ideas to pour billions into." I've never heard anybody come to those hearings and say, "Stop spending money."

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I'll tell you who comes to the hearings: everybody who believes—and rightfully so in many cases—that they have a great idea for the government to pour more money into, that this sector or that sector, or this issue or that program, needs to be funded to a greater degree for it to be completely successful, or for it to continue to be successful. I've never heard somebody come and say, "We need less money."

So when the pre-budget period comes up next year, they are going to be inundated, just as they are every year, with a group of deputants that say, "Our program is in danger of collapsing," or, "The fine work we do for this group of people" or that group of people "is in danger of being lost, if you don't put more money into it." That's the kind of pressure that is going to continue to be exerted on this socially activist Premier. This is her DNA. How is she going to say no? There are a million good ideas, if we had an unlimited supply of money. So how is this Premier going to say to those people, "No, there is no money"? It's not going to happen, Speaker. You know it. You know that I'm right. It is not going to happen. She is going to find a way to spend that money and increase the deficit next year.

Where is this going to put us in the final year, 2017-18? That is going to leave the government with either an absolute retraction or a failure of their plan to balance the budget, which they're absolutely committed to. In the throne speech there were no ands, ifs or buts about it: They're absolutely committed to balancing that budget. So where is that going to leave them in the final year, because they don't have the you know what to deal with it on an ongoing basis? If you don't start dealing with it today, the problem only gets bigger.

They say they're not going to kick this down the road for future generations. That's exactly what they're planning to do. In the last year, 2017-18, we are going to be faced with either a withdrawal of the promise to balance the budget, which is going to send a terribly negative signal to investors all around the world, not only the credit rating agencies but everybody who has money to invest in the economy of their choice—this will send a tremendously negative message to those people. They're either going to have to say, "We're not going to balance the budget," or they are going to have to embark on a government austerity program with cuts that you will have never seen the like of ever before because they will have pushed the envelope so far. Instead of making those incremental changes now and then next year, they will have to do everything in the final year. They are going to be faced with an impossible task—an impossible task—and the people of Ontario are going to pay, one way or another. Because if they're not going to make those cuts to balance the budget, then they are going to have to

increase taxes by a commensurate amount. So if they're not going to make the cuts, they're going to increase taxes.

Now, what effect will that have on our economy if they increase the taxes by that amount? We're not talking chump change here, Speaker. We're talking in the tens of billions of dollars by the time we get there. How are they going to do that? If they have to increase the revenue in order to balance those books, that's going to have the same dampening effect on our economy, in a different way. Those investors are going to say, "No, I'm not putting my money into an economy where I'm taxed to death. It's not going to happen."

They've got a tiger by the tail here. I know they're pretty smug over there right now because they've got their majority and they're all pretty happy, all feeling pretty secure. On a personal basis, yes, you are secure for four years, but what are you doing to the security of the people of Ontario? What are you doing about the security of the next generation? What are you doing about your children, your grandchildren and those yet unborn? What are you doing for those people? What future are you offering them because you refuse to face reality? You refuse to face reality, whistling past the graveyard and hoping that somebody else is going to pick up the pieces when you're gone. That is wrong.

Anyway, Speaker, it's just amazing how little time I get to speak in this place, and then to top it all off, I get interrupted by points of order from time to time.

I want to speak to a specific item in the budget now. There are so many, I could go on for three days.

Hon. James J. Bradley: No doubt.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, was that support of my proposition or was that a denial?

Let's talk about one particular item in the budget: the increase in the aviation fuel tax. All across Canada, in other provinces, they're either reducing it or eliminating it. In BC, they've eliminated it because they recognize the dampening effect it has on commercial activity—and commercial activity from the point of view of average citizens buying airline tickets to travel, as well, and the competition we face because in this country we're all border cities, and not too far away from any major city is going to be the United States of America, that gigantic economy that seems to be able to offer things at a lower price than we do. So what are we doing? We're going to raise the aviation fuel tax and force people over the border.

The finance minister says he's going to help out some airports—did he say northern? Did he say smaller?—but every airport and particularly the smaller ones.

I'm going to talk about the Pembroke regional airport, Pembroke and Area Airport, in my riding. They're going to be hurt terribly by this aviation fuel tax, and they are struggling as it is. Most of these airports have been taken over by municipalities. There are six municipalities that now look after the Pembroke and Area Airport. They're left holding the bill. They can't get federal funding unless they have a scheduled carrier coming in on a regular

basis, and in order to do that, they have to be able to offer the services, and in order to be able to do that, they have to be solvent. It's a struggle for them. And now, over the next 20 years, they're going to have to invest at least \$7.5 million in upgrades to that airport, or they'll be forced to close. Yesterday I had a good chance to talk to Allan Wren, the chairman of the airport. Now they're going to get hit with this aviation fuel tax. This is going to further erode the amount of business being done at the Pembroke and Area Airport.

The Premier talks about wanting to support all of Ontario. In counties like Renfrew, we are dependent on having that regional airport. We don't have very many other opportunities. Nobody is going to come in and build a new airport in my riding of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. The Pembroke airport, which is a very high-quality facility, is already there, but we're now threatening that very airport with the decision you've made to raise that aviation fuel tax.

Today we're going to vote on that budget. I'll be voting against it. But sadly, the pawns on the other side will take their marching orders and vote with the social activist Premier and support this bad budget. They're going to support a budget that spends \$12.5 billion more than we take in this year. They're going to support that. I will not support that.

Some of the things they're doing are so hurtful to rural Ontario. They continue to talk about supporting rural Ontario, but every action they take is one that is detrimental to the success of rural Ontario. The increase in the aviation fuel tax is one that is very, very specific.

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I could go on and talk about so many other items in the budget, but I am shocked that I'm down to my final minute.

Interjection: No.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes.

Now, this is the last opportunity, and I'm going to say this to the new members over there because I don't think, in the few short weeks that you've been here, that even intravenously, they've been able to feed you enough of the Kool-Aid to completely corrupt you yet. Can I say that?

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, point of order. So I withdraw. I withdraw.

But I don't think they've been able to do it to you yet. You have one last chance to redeem yourself to the people of Ontario. Show that you've got a spine. Show that you're going to stick up for them. Show that you've got a mind of your own. Vote against this budget. I implore the new members of the Liberal Party: Vote against the budget. It's your last chance—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order.

Questions and comments?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, I think it needs to be said, and for the record, I'm going to say it today: The member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke is probably

one of the most entertaining and satisfying speakers in this House. Please give him a round of applause.

Applause.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: You may not agree with him, but you can't deny that you enjoy listening to him.

I always enjoy listening to you, sir, and I must say that.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: No, you really do. You did a great job. It was really enjoyable.

One of the things I want to pick up on and which the member talked about was looking at the different regions of Ontario. I think we have a very important responsibility, and I'm hoping that we can work on this over the next couple of years, but there are issues that exist in rural Ontario—and the member brought up some of the issues and the fact that particularly with the aviation fuel tax, it's going to impact his local airport, and that's an important, vibrant part of his community. So there are impacts and there are issues that face rural Ontario.

One of the things we need to do—and I think it's very important—is recognize that while we have a lot of different regions and a lot of different concerns, really, underneath all those differences, we have a lot in common. We need to work on solutions and we need to work on ways that we can come up with, collaborative solutions, that recognize that, though there are different areas of this province that have different issues, running through those differences is a very, very unifying similarity and a unifying common issue. We need to work towards creating more unity in our province instead of looking at issues that divide and pit urban against suburban against rural, because, really, at the end of the day, there's so much we have in common, and we should work towards creating a better Ontario for every region in Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'd like to just deal with three things my honourable friend mentioned. First off, taxes: Our business taxes and taxes on investment and capital now are lower than they were when you were in government. Number two is they are significantly lower than the United States, Mr. Speaker, to the point that the United States right now has \$38 trillion in offshore taxes in business it cannot collect. Even Republican senators like Hank Paulson, Bush's Secretary of the Treasury, point to Canada's business tax, and Ontario's particularly, as being the right way to go. So I guess you're a lot smarter than most people in the world, my friend.

Second, the Pan Am Games: This is a party, opposite, that delivered nothing. Vancouver got the Olympics when you were in power. Montreal got the Olympics when you were in power. Calgary got the Olympics when you were in power. The Conservatives, in 40 years of governing, got no bubkes, Mr. Speaker. We haven't seen an international event in Ontario since 1934. Winnipeg got the Pan Am Games in 1967 and 1999. They are so appallingly ignorant of this, they don't know that the Pan Am Games

is actually a larger event than the Olympics: more athletes, more visitors and, for economic development, incredibly important, because our trading relationships with Mexico, the United States, Chile, Argentina and Brazil are so incredibly significant.

So the reason we have those bright, young, open-minded members—the member from Beaches–East York, who is the first Liberal there in 102 years, and my friend from Burlington, the first Liberal in about 70, 74 years—is that people were tired of that ignorant rhetoric of not knowing or having enough understanding of the economy. And they don't drink your Kool-Aid, my friend.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Sit down, please.

Questions and comments?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to comment on my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and his comments. The Liberals really didn't take them well, the realities that he was giving to you about the numbers that are happening across the province of Ontario and how you are jeopardizing the future.

The Minister of the Environment, or Climate Change, or whatever he wants to be called, gets up there and pontificates that we are not projecting, that we are not telling the people of the province of Ontario what's really happening, and they are the only party that's going to save the world, and we know that's not true.

Look at your budget. Look at what you are doing to the people of Ontario by putting them in record debt and deficit. Your third-largest budget item is paying the interest. What is that doing for health care, education and social services?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would ask the speaker to speak through the Chair, please.

Ms. Laurie Scott: You're ignoring the realities.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government have the award for the 90th consecutive month in a row for record unemployment in this country. Now, they wear that as a badge of honour. Should you not just be totally embarrassed?

The companies, they're leaving—as soon as you got elected, they continued to leave. So just watch the numbers as businesses leave the province of Ontario. You're not creating jobs; you're losing jobs. What was it: some 39,000 jobs just in June alone that you lost for the province of Ontario? And now the aviation fuel tax: We've spoken a lot about it. It's affecting our small municipal airports that are struggling to survive. That's another uncompetitive disadvantage that they're going to have.

They don't have a plan to balance the budget. There's a lot of rhetoric. And they do get the award for spinning to the public of Ontario that everything is okay. Everything is not okay, and we're going to see that in the years to come. I feel sorry for the province of Ontario that this Liberal government is in power.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to stand in this House and to follow the member from Renfrew–Nipissing—where is the other one?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Pembroke.

Mr. John Vanthof: Pembroke. He is one of the most engaging speakers in the House, and he brought up some points—I don't always agree with him, but he brought up some points specifically on his airport. I also have an airport, Earlton regional airport, and it's struggling to maintain itself. The local municipalities are putting money in the pot to keep that airport there. It also needs scheduled air service, because if it doesn't get it, we won't have any air service. We don't have train service anymore. So while we talk about big plans for Toronto, and I agree with some of these big plans, there are other parts of Ontario that have no public transportation. What they're proposing in this budget is going to make that even more precarious.

I'd like to bring up another issue. They've got big plans and we're going to spend all this big money, but let's bring it right back to our municipalities. One of my municipalities is Kirkland Lake. Two years ago, Kirkland Lake almost burned down from forest fires. Yes, the Ministry of Natural Resources sent in the big choppers and they saved Kirkland Lake. But Kirkland had a local MNR fire service, and what happened last year, due to MNR budget cuts, is that they were cut. So in a town that almost burned down, that's surrounded by forest, they cut the forest firefighters.

In this budget, if you look in the fine print, guess which ministry is cut again.

Mr. John Yakabuski: MNR.

Mr. John Vanthof: The Ministry of Natural Resources—and Forestry, provided it doesn't burn down.

That's the problem with this budget: great messaging—a billion here, a billion there—but when you read the fine print, it's a cut here and a cut there, and much bigger cuts coming, and they're not telling anyone.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I'm sorry; I made a mistake in my count. My apologies to you.

The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, you have two minutes for a response.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much. I'd like to thank the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, the Minister of the Environment, the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane for their remarks.

The member for Timiskaming–Cochrane said something very pertinent about the communication skills of the Liberals. There's no question they're great communicators. The Minister of the Environment is a great communicator, except he only ever wants to talk about 20% of the story. But the people of Ontario have a right to the whole story. My colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock started to talk about the rest of the story.

Do you remember that radio show, “The Rest of the Story,” that little snippet there after the noon news? Well, now you know the rest of the story. This is where Liberal budgetary policy is getting us: 36,000 lost jobs in the month of June alone. Where were the jobs replaced? Oh, more jobs in the public sector. They’re not producing anything; they’re not making any widgets; they’re not adding to the economy the way jobs in the private sector will, because our taxes pay for that job, as opposed to economic activity paying for that job. So very good points by my colleague, and I appreciate them.

It speaks to the big picture about how really, really lost you people are when it comes to managing the budget and the province’s economy. Because you’re so optimistically unrealistic, you’re hoping that somehow, all of a sudden, just at the eleventh hour, the fairy godmother just swoops in and takes away all your problems and the deficit’s gone, the debt begins to be reduced and Ontario is doing great again. Well, Ontario won’t do great again without the right leadership. You people have not shown it in 10 years—11 years—and by this budget you show once again that you’re incapable of that leadership.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? Further debate? Last call for further debate.

Mr. Naqvi has moved third reading of Bill 14, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion, please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until after question period.

Third reading vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Orders of the day.

Hon. James J. Bradley: No further business, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): This House stands recessed until 10:30 a.m.

The House recessed from 1003 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Speaker, I’d like to introduce a volunteer of mine for the summer, going into grade 12 next year, Jason Kerkvliet. Thanks, Jason. He’s made the trip to Toronto today.

Hon. Michael Chan: I would like to welcome my three hard-working interns to watch question period at Queen’s Park today. They are from the great ministry of MCIIT. They are Rebecca Neilson, Aliya Hussein and Ian Davis. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I’d like to introduce two constituents from my riding, if they would stand. They are Sean Sullivan and his son Michael. Sean is a well-known lawyer in our community and he’s also my riding

association president. His entire family worked very hard on our campaign, and I’m delighted to have them here today.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I would like to introduce two of my guests today. I would like to welcome my ministry’s summer interns, Stephen Colle and Jacob Hong. I would like to thank them for their hard work and their wonderful contribution to my ministry. Thank you very much. Merci.

Hon. Reza Moridi: It’s a great pleasure to introduce two of my interns, the young ladies over there, Gazal Amin and Tanvir Janmohamed. I wish them all the best in their careers in the future.

Ms. Soo Wong: I’m very pleased to welcome some guests of mine from Scarborough—Agincourt: the mother of page David Zhou, Ying Zheng, and family friend Yi Fang Ding. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I’d like to welcome from my community of Scarborough—Guildwood the mother of page Stephanie Ttofias, Angela Ttofias, and her brother Constantine Ttofias, who is a former page.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I would like to welcome Karina Smith from my campaign office. She worked very hard for me during the campaign. Welcome, Karina.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Speaker, I have four great interns to introduce, and a couple of them may have been introduced already: Neville Britto and Sanjey Jegathesan, two I know very, very well; and Evan Walman and Max Stern, from my previous post and my current post.

M. Arthur Potts: C’est un grand plaisir que je vous présente mon assistant exécutif, Phillipe Murphy-Rhéaume, qui est dans la Chambre aujourd’hui.

Mr. Han Dong: I would like to introduce a constituent of mine and a good friend, also an intern at the Ministry of Health: Ms. Tara McDonnell. Welcome, Tara.

Mr. Todd Smith: It’s a pleasure to welcome back to the Legislature my beautiful wife, Tawnya Smith, who’s here, and my daughter Reagan; and to welcome back to the Legislature my daughter Payton, who was a page just prior to Christmas, and also her friend Alex Calderon, who’s here.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have with us today in the Speaker’s gallery the newly installed ambassador to Canada from the Republic of Moldova, Her Excellency Ala Belevschi. She’s accompanied by her spouse, Ghenadie Belevschi. Please join me in giving a warm welcome to our ambassador.

Applause.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): At the risk of being a little premature, but with the understanding of the House, I would like to announce that this will be the last day for our pages—possibly. Might I say thank you.

What I was cautious of was to ensure that we are still thinking things through. But in the case that it is, I would love for us to acknowledge our appreciation to our pages.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): To ensure that everyone perfectly understands what I was getting at, the Speaker has absolutely no influence over this whatsoever, and the House does participate in discussions. So thank you very much.

It is now time for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

POWER PLANTS

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Premier. Premier, when the election was called, people across Ontario were still waiting to find out the facts about the billion-dollar gas plant scandal here in the province of Ontario. Now, you've apologized for the billion dollars over and over again—we understand that—but there's some unfinished business: a police investigation into possible criminal activity. We were waiting at the justice committee to hear from two very important witnesses, Peter Faist and Laura Miller.

Premier, I'm going to ask you this: When committees are reconstituted, will you ensure that we have the opportunity to interview and to depose witnesses Peter Faist and Laura Miller, who are central to this criminal investigation?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I thank the member opposite for the question. I made it very clear during the election campaign, Mr. Speaker, that we believed it was important that the justice committee should be able to complete its work and write a report. As the member opposite knows, the committee had the opportunity to look at 400,000 pages of documents, including 30,000 from the Premier's office. There were more than 70 witnesses who were in front of the committee.

Really, I believe it is very important that the committee have the opportunity to do the writing of that report so that the conclusions it reached as a result of looking at all of those documents and hearing all that testimony will be in a report that can provide advice for going forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Premier, I hardly think it's time for report writing when we have yet to hear from the two key witnesses. If Perry Mason found out that there were two eyewitnesses to the case, they would be heard.

We're asking you. You have the power. Don't let this report get written. It is not time to write the report; it is time to hear what Peter Faist and Laura Miller know. They are the central characters in this caper. They know what happened.

We are talking about deleted emails, destroyed documents. This is a serious, serious case. You cannot put this off and say that it's time to write the report. The people of Ontario have the right to know what happened.

These people will not speak to the police, as is their right, but they have said through their lawyers that they will testify before the justice committee. Will you not take your responsibility seriously and allow those witnesses to come before the justice committee?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Hon. James J. Bradley: John, are you running?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would remind the Chair of the Cabinet that when I stand, nothing happens. Premier.

1040

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

As a number of my colleagues on this side of the House have said, you are not Perry Mason, but your performance was worthy of Perry Mason.

I just want to clarify: There were some comments made by the member for Toronto–Danforth on December 12 of last year. He said at that time, “I believe it's time for us to get down to report writing. We've amassed a large amount of evidence, both oral and in electronic copy.”

At the same time, he made this motion: “I move that the Standing Committee on Justice Policy meet on the following days for the purpose of report writing.” That was the member for Toronto–Danforth on December 12, 2013.

The member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton, on April 29 of this year, said, “I move that ... the Standing Committee on Justice Policy begin report writing in open session.”

So, in fact, there were members of the committee who were fully apprised of what the committee had gone through, fully apprised of the information that the committee had in front of it, who actually believed that it was time for report writing. I believe that. I concur.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, I'm not pretending to be Perry Mason, but I will say this: At the time of that motion before the committee, Peter Faist and Laura Miller were not even known about. Nobody knew the role that they played. You're premature and you're wanting the people to hear what you want them to hear, but what the people really want to hear is what Peter Faist and Laura Miller had to do with this caper. They want to know what their involvement was and who else is involved in this possible criminal activity.

You have a responsibility as the Premier of this province. You have absolute power now. You've got your majority. You can compel this committee to see those two witnesses so we will finally hear who might be responsible for the destruction of documents and the deletion of emails.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I will maintain my request for decorum.

New question. The member for Nepean–Carleton.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Oh, sorry. Well, there goes my decorum. Let's all use our inside voices, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I thank the member opposite for his inspiring performance today. We were missing him in the House.

I remind the member opposite that he is also not the OPP. There is a criminal investigation in this matter, as you are aware, and it is before the police. I think it would be the prudent thing to do for all members to let the police do their work.

In fact, I agree with what the Leader of the Opposition said on July 14, when he said that we'll have to rely on the OPP to do their business there. He was right, and I urge the members to rely on the OPP to get the work done. That is the most prudent course. We should let the police do their job.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As subtle as it was, I would remind the House leader, and all members, that we do not reference anyone's presence or absence in this place.

Mr. Todd Smith: We're happy to have him back too.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would ask the member from Prince Edward–Hastings to allow me to try to get some decorum. Thank you.

POWER PLANTS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is also to the Premier. In the throne speech, your government committed to Ontarians that it would allow the justice committee to complete its work on the gas plant scandal, but, as my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke pointed out, to date, the justice committee has not been instructed to pursue that report writing. As well, the Liberals have made no effort to ensure that two key and remaining witnesses, Laura Miller and Peter Faist, have come before the committee. I remind her that the NDP only asked for the report writing when they didn't expect there would be an OPP investigation into this government.

So will the Premier live up to her promise and her commitment to the people of Ontario, strike the justice committee this summer and ensure that those two key witnesses appear before it?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I thank the member opposite for the question. Speaker, as the Premier mentioned, the justice committee has been working on this issue for a full two years. They have heard from 90 witnesses thus far on this very important issue. They have received about 400,000 documents to look at, and 30,000 of those documents come straight from the Premier's office. It is time for them to continue the work of writing the report. They have ample information available to them. It is a good time that they give advice to the government as to what steps can be taken to ensure that we have got proper siting rules in place in the province of Ontario when it comes to large energy infrastructure.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I asked the Premier this question and I think it's important for her to answer Ontarians through this question. There are currently two ongoing

OPP investigations into your government, one at Ornge and one here with the gas plants scandal. You may have given us 40,000 documents, but we need these two key witnesses to testify so that we can get the answers that we need, deserve and can continue to do the work that we've been asked to do by the public.

I give the Premier credit, as well as the former Premier credit, for testifying before the committee, and I'll also take her at her word that she wants to ensure that this will never happen again. But if the Premier truly believes that it is her job to prevent this from happening in the future, she will strike the committee this summer, she will ensure those two key witnesses appear before the committee, and she will allow the committee to report to this assembly. Therefore, I ask the Premier, one final time, will you commit today to ensuring those two key witnesses appear before the committee and that that is done this summer?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: As I mentioned earlier, there is ample information that has been provided to the committee. The committee has been doing fairly diligent work for a full two years. It is time that we get some guidance from the committee. In fact, even the members of the committee, as the Premier mentioned earlier, have started talking about report writing. In fact, there was a motion that was presented from the member for Toronto–Danforth to do exactly the same: to start the work on report writing so that all the information that has been collected throughout the hearings can be used in a meaningful way to provide guidance to the government. I really urge the members to start focusing on writing their report so that we can use that information for more useful purposes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Again, back to the Premier: You made the commitment in your throne speech that the committee would begin its report writing. That hasn't happened. You made a commitment to the public that this would never happen again, but you're refusing to allow us to talk to two very key witnesses. We are never going to get the \$1.1 billion back that your government squandered in order to save five Liberal seats in the second-last provincial election. You promised us that that cancellation would only cost \$40 million, and we found out that that wasn't true.

So I ask you again: You made a commitment to the people of Ontario that you would allow the justice committee to pursue its report writing. You made a commitment to the people of Ontario that you wouldn't let this happen again. Why are you breaking the commitment? Why won't you live up to your obligations? Why won't you do what you said you would in your throne speech? Please answer me that.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: What the member opposite is asking is for us to insert ourselves into a police investigation. Speaker, that would be an entirely inappropriate thing to do. Let the police do their work. They are the most capable ones to be able to accomplish that task. That's what we need to focus on, and the committee needs to

ensure that the evidence that they have collected, the information that they have gathered over the last two full years, with 400,000 pages of documents, over 90 witnesses who have testified—that we now start the work of report writing. I look forward for the justice committee to commence that work.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Yesterday, the Premier said, “I do welcome the Auditor General’s questions. I welcome her scrutiny at any point...” Yet the Premier is blocking New Democrats’ calls for an independent report by the Auditor General on the Liberals’ election budget despite the growing questions about the gaps between rhetoric and reality—gaps like the \$1.1-billion hole where dedicated revenue funds for transit are supposed to be.

1050

Will the Premier acknowledge that the government has no intention of actually placing \$1.1 billion annually from the gas tax into a dedicated legal entity like the Trillium Trust?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just say, once again, that we are committed to building transit. We are committed to putting money into the trust so that it can be clear to people what the projects are that we are going to build and the money that’s being spent on those projects.

Again, I think what’s happening is the leader of the third party is looking for some reason not to support the budget.

Just in terms of the general questions about our fiscal plan, if the leader of the third party would read her own platform, she’d remember that she based her platform on our fiscal plan. She said, “We will balance Ontario’s books by 2017-18 with significantly more fiscal space than the Liberal plan.” She goes on to say, “Our plan will provide an additional fiscal cushion of over \$700 million annually.”

So she was using our plan as the foundation, and she was going to—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The need for an independent review of the fiscal plan by the Auditor General is becoming clearer and clearer by the day. While the Premier claims to be dedicating billions of repurposed gas tax dollars to transit, she has chosen not to establish, by law, any dedicated transit funds in the public accounts. That raises red flags, Speaker. Will the Premier confirm that the Ministry of Finance still does not know how to account for the government’s claims of dedicated funding or how much funding is actually going to flow for transit?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Finance is going to want to comment on the specifics, but let’s just listen to what’s happening here. The fact is, we made a commitment in our budget. We built a fiscal plan around investments in transit and transportation

infrastructure across the province. They adopted it. The leader of the third party and her colleagues adopted that fiscal plan.

Then they said they were going find \$600 million more cuts but, all the while, they did not have a specific plan in addition to what we had put in place for building transit. They did not have a plan that would build the transportation infrastructure, transit, roads and bridges around the province that we know are so very necessary.

We have that plan. We’ve got the pathway laid out for how we’re going to do that. I hope that is a compelling enough argument that they will now vote for the budget and support that transit investment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The problem is that the Premier likes to talk about the path, but the path simply doesn’t exist in the budget that she tabled here in this Legislature. So my question remains to this Premier: Why won’t she call on the Auditor General to conduct an immediate review and address the questions, like this one, about the lack of a dedicated fund for transit for the repurposed gas tax dollars—why won’t she answer those kinds of questions that are swirling below the surface of her Trojan Horse budget?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, I think I just heard the member opposite from the third party saying that she would vote for the budget if it clearly states our support from the Auditor General. On page 46, “Once the funds are established, the province would track new spending on projects, ensuring transparency and accountability for all Ontarians. An online portal would report publicly on project funding and implementation progress.” That’s page 46.

On page 180, we’ve outlined the work we’re doing on the reporting mechanism, that we’ll work closely with the Auditor General to ensure accountability and transparency in the process. That’s on page 180.

On page 163, we state clearly time and again, “The government will not sell public assets for the purposes of meeting operating budget shortfalls.”

We’ve said it’s dedicated to infrastructure. We clearly stated that in the budget. I now look forward to your supporting the budget as we put it forward.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sports will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You better. Start the clock. New question.

FISCAL REVIEW

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. The Premier cannot brush off the questions

that are being asked about the credibility of her fiscal plan. If she wants to dodge these questions she should at least stop preventing the Auditor General from providing trusted and independent answers. Why won't the Premier allow the auditor, who has valuable expertise and experience, to provide the public with the answers to the questions about what's really in her Trojan Horse plan?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, as I have said repeatedly, I welcome the scrutiny of the Auditor General. The Minister of Finance has just gone over how we are clear that we want to work with the Auditor General as we set up this new process for investing in transit and transportation infrastructure. The Auditor General will do her work. She will report in the fall, and as I say, we welcome that scrutiny.

But I think that it is very important that people understand that the fiscal plan that we put forward is exactly the fiscal plan that the NDP built their platform on. They took the plan that we had put forward and then they said, "We're going to find \$600 million more in cuts." The fact is that the plan that we put forward is the one that they supported. I hope that they understand that and therefore will support our budget.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the fact of the matter is that this Premier, particularly this Premier, has talked a lot about dedicated transit funds, but with no legal guarantee that so-called "dedicated transit funds" will actually support transit projects. It's actually time to get the auditor's take on this fiscal plan. It's time to address the confusing gap between what the Premier says, what the finance minister says, and what the budget actually does—a gap that the Ministry of Finance officials are trying to figure out behind the scenes. Will the Premier call in the auditor to sort out the confusion for the public or not?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, as we have said, the Auditor General will do her work, will look at our plan. We have laid out clearly how we will engage her in terms of setting up these new processes.

We are committed to building transit, just as we are committed to a \$2.5-billion Jobs and Prosperity Fund, just as we're committed to broader infrastructure investments; in fact, \$130 billion in transit, transportation, schools, roads, bridges, hospitals—all those public infrastructure investments that we know are so important for the economy. We're committed to \$4.2 billion in school retrofits and builds. We're committed to a made-in-Ontario retirement pension plan. We're committed to increasing the Ontario Child Benefit. We're committed to expanding student nutrition programs. I would have thought that the leader of the third party and her colleagues would have supported all those things.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: An open review of the assumptions, estimates and forecasts in this budget is the prudent and responsible thing to do. It's the way to promote transparency and confidence in our province.

It's the way to protect our economy by providing the independent assurance to families, businesses and investors that they need to see. Why is this Premier standing in the way of an independent review that can only provide clarity and help strengthen the confidence in Ontario's fiscal position?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: What stood in the way of an independent review on a timely basis was an untimely call for an election, and that is what caused our problem.

We are doing an audit on our books; that's going to happen. It's going to come out in public accounts in the fall, so the Auditor General will do her job.

The member has already been advised that in the budget it talks at great lengths about how that transparency will work and the fact that it is dedicated funding to transit. So we're saying that's what it is. The Auditor General will certainly support it when we put it forward.

But more importantly, the member opposite talks about something that's very critical, and that is an accountability officer, which we were prepared to put forward. They delayed it; they called an election. Now we have to put that in place as well.

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AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, would you agree that it is a fundamental responsibility of the provincial government to ensure that all Ontarians have the fastest ambulance response times possible?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, I can't help but think that this may be a Trojan Horse question, so I'm anxiously awaiting the supplementary, just to see where the member opposite is going on this.

Of course, having the best possible ambulance service in Canada, indeed in the world, is our aspiration as a government. It's important that individuals across this province, when they have the need or a family member has the need for that type of service, have access.

I want to use the opportunity—I am certain the member is going to shine some more light on this in a moment, but I want to commend the 7,000 paramedics across this province, the more than 1,600 ambulances that they are working through and with, and the many, many health care workers who do an excellent job every day of providing that service for Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: I as well. In fact, I will give you a bit of credit here. Your government did take steps to streamline dispatch in the region of Niagara in 2005, and, as a result, local officials were able to shave two minutes off emergency response times.

The region of Waterloo has put forward a similar proposal, yet your government has stood in the way of this life-saving solution for more than two and a half years. Former Waterloo region police chief Larry Graville found that by moving forward with the region's plan to

bring all dispatch centres under one roof, local officials could improve ambulance response times by one minute and 16 seconds.

Minister, why does your government think that improving ambulance response times in Niagara region makes sense, but not in Waterloo region?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I do appreciate the question. The member opposite no doubt knows that the province is responsible for dispatch; the municipalities have responsibility for operating our emergency medical services. It's important that this partnership work extremely well and that it also be a seamless operation. So at the end of the day, we have to look at the patient experience and ensure that what we're providing as a service in a co-ordinated fashion is indeed providing that high-quality service that Ontarians should and need to expect.

I'm happy to look into this. I know that there are several jurisdictions that want to or are having this conversation with my ministry, and I would be happy to follow up with the member opposite on this.

HAMILTON SPORTS STADIUM

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the minister for the Pan/Parapan Games. Speaker, Infrastructure Ontario is a crown corporation wholly owned by the government of Ontario—in other words, the people of Ontario. A responsibility of Infrastructure Ontario is to manage project delivery for the people of Ontario.

We have just learned that Infrastructure Ontario is now threatening to withhold \$89 million from the contractor responsible for overseeing the construction of the Hamilton stadium because construction is not on schedule and the stadium wasn't done in time for the July home games of the current tenants, the Hamilton Tiger-Cats, and probably won't be done for all of August.

Speaker, will the minister tell Ontarians how this “on budget, on time” project now has to have the government step in and threaten to withhold payment to the foreign-led private contractor it picked if the contractor doesn't pull it together and get this job done?

Hon. Michael Coteau: The minister responsible for economic development, trade and infrastructure.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: It's a long title.

The challenge I have with this is your position, your party's position, when it comes to AFP projects. The idea of AFP projects and the new way that Infrastructure Ontario does these projects is it takes the onus off the taxpayer and places it on the contractor. You oppose that. It's ironic that you would ask this question, because if you had your way, the taxpayers would be on the hook for any cost to delay. The way that Infrastructure Ontario has wisely put this contract forward, it takes the taxpayers off the hook. The good news—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Two things: Questions to the Chair and answers to the Chair, which

prevents the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek being asked by me to come to order.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'll certainly comply with that. I don't know if that will help, but I'll certainly comply with that, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Brad Duguid: The good news here is that the Hamilton Tiger-Cats will soon be in a brand-spanking-new stadium, something that we all can be very proud of and celebrate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Paul Miller: We also learned that the city of Hamilton has agreed to intervene with your people—who aren't doing the job—and the contractor, to press the issue of the million-dollar contractual obligation made to the Ticats for every home game that they've missed. The city of Hamilton realizes the seriousness of this problem. Ontarians realize it. It's just not clear that the minister realizes it.

Speaker, where is the accountability? Will the minister guarantee that the penalty paid to the Tiger-Cats for every home game that they miss due to construction delays will not be underwritten by Ontarians? Don't forget, Speaker—to the minister—that they're going back to Spain. Good luck trying to collect it at international court.

Hon. Brad Duguid: The only guarantee here is that, had we listened to the member opposite and his party when it comes to these kinds of infrastructure projects, Ontario taxpayers would be on the hook for any delay costs. The fact is that, the way these contracts are written, Ontario taxpayers are not on the hook. That's good news to Hamilton taxpayers and good news to Ontario taxpayers.

It's also good news that the record of Infrastructure Ontario when it comes to these kinds of projects is almost unheard of around the world: 29 out of 30 projects that they've done through the AFP process have been on time and on budget. That's a pretty good record.

At the end of the day, this project will get built in time for the games, which is priority number one, and in time for the Tiger-Cats to run onto the field and celebrate a brand new stadium.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek is warned.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs will come to order.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: My question is also to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. Minister, Ontario's economy continues to grow, creating jobs and business opportunities for Ontarians. The global economic environment, although showing signs of recovery, remains challenging.

This means that, in a highly competitive world, we have to work tirelessly to create conditions for our com-

panies and people to succeed, both now and in the future. We must build on our momentum and move forward with a balanced approach to grow the economy and create more jobs for Ontarians.

I know that my constituents in Halton, along with residents across Ontario, want to know what this government is doing to ensure a robust and competitive future for Ontario's economy. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Could the minister update the House on how the government will help Ontario's economy foster competitiveness and innovation, and create jobs?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I want to thank the member for this very important question. There's no question that our government's top priority is to grow our economy and create good jobs in every region of the province. Our efforts have helped make Ontario number one in North America for foreign direct investment, and we're determined to build on that success.

That's why, as part of the 2014 budget, our government introduced the new 10-year, \$2.5-billion Jobs and Prosperity Fund. This fund follows up on a recommendation from Don Drummond to consolidate cross-government business support programs to create a more coordinated, one-window approach, with consistent accountability and measurement systems.

The fund will improve Ontario's ability to attract significant business investments and support our future economic growth as regions around the world compete fiercely for these investments. This government is absolutely committed to competing and winning in the global economy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure for the update. My constituents will be pleased to hear that our government is moving forward with key initiatives that will help grow Ontario's economy, foster competitiveness and innovation, and create jobs.

Minister, the agri-food industry is an important contributor to our economy. Ontario food-processing companies provide jobs for close to 96,000 people.

1110

In my riding of Halton, we are fortunate to have a strong food-processing sector. For example, Dare Foods Ltd. continue to produce innovative, high-quality products for consumption around the world.

But, Minister, Ontario's food processing faces intense competition from other jurisdictions, both in North America and internationally. Many of my Halton constituents want to know how the Jobs and Prosperity Fund will assist those striving to provide quality food in a competitive economy.

Speaker, can the minister please provide details on how the Jobs and Prosperity Fund will ignite job creation?

Hon. Brad Duguid: To the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, please.

Hon. Jeff Leal: While I'm on my feet this morning, I had the opportunity last Tuesday to visit the community

of Tecumseh and visit the Bonduelle company that was devastated by a fire last Friday.

I want to thank the member from Halton for her question. In fact, my brother and sister-in-law, Doug and Jane, live in the great community of Milton. They know that in Milton, the food industry is an important contributor to the economy.

We look forward, when our 2014 budget is approved this afternoon, to the \$40 million annually for food processing in the province of Ontario to build on the \$34 billion that the agri-food sector contributes to Ontario's GDP—740,000 jobs in that sector—and I look forward to working with the member from Halton for even more jobs in this sector, Mr. Speaker.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Steve Clark: Good morning, Speaker. My question, through you, is to the Minister of Energy. Good morning, Minister.

Every day, multinational companies in my riding and across the province crunch numbers to compare the costs of operating in Ontario to other jurisdictions. Good-paying jobs that built our province, and support communities like Brockville, hang in the balance of these calculations. With our industrial electricity costs among the highest in North America, Ontario's competitive advantage has disappeared along with those jobs.

But there is a solution to lower our energy costs and retain our manufacturing base. Can you tell the manufacturing workers still employed in my riding, who are worried about their future, why you stubbornly refuse to import cheap, green hydro power from Quebec?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. The member will remember our budget that we introduced in May and which we reintroduced and hopefully will be finished today. There is an expanded program, the Industrial Electricity Incentive Program, which actually uses our surplus energy to incent new businesses to establish here in Ontario and to expand existing businesses. That gives them in excess of a 25% reduction on their industrial electricity rates in the province of Ontario.

We've already done a number of these programs, and they've been taken up 100%. We're expanding the program, and it is creating jobs. It's creating jobs in eastern Ontario and every other part of the province, particularly in northern Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Steve Clark: Back to the minister: Minister, the infrastructure exists for us to get this cheap power. You know that, because you already use it to pay Quebec to take our expensive excess wind power. A lack of wires here isn't the problem; it's you clinging to a failed ideology. Put away your comments about your programs, and let's deal with what's happening in the real world. Jobs are vanishing, and I fear there's worse news to come for our economy and in my riding if you continue to do nothing about these increased rates. Meanwhile, manu-

facturers in Quebec enjoy electricity prices 55% lower than ours.

When is the light bulb going to come on over there? How many more manufacturing jobs do we have to lose? Put away your failed plans, and start negotiating with Quebec.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, the member might know that Ontario and Quebec are already significant electricity trading partners. In fact, Ontario can import power from Quebec when it is cost-effective to do so. The member should also know that Quebec has the need for Ontario power. In fact, this January, over a period of four or five days, Quebec did not have enough power to serve its own population, and they were importing some of our surplus power. They have electric heating across the province.

In fact, the member should know—and he's not listening; the member is not listening, Mr. Speaker—that our long-term energy plan has a provision in it that requires us to start discussions with Manitoba and Quebec with respect to more energy trading. He should also know that it takes significantly more infrastructure in terms of transmission and interties and significant costs to make it happen.

Mr. Speaker, we are very, very—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Minister of Labour. Yesterday, the minister told reporters that unpaid internships do not exist in Ontario and that he is not sure if this is a growing problem.

The thousands of young people in this province who are asked to work for free after they graduate know that unpaid internships exist, and the thousands of Ontarians who agree that this government needs to take action know that the problem has increased since the recession.

Speaker, how can the minister deal with an issue when he refuses to acknowledge that it exists?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member for this important question. Let me be very, very clear: What we are saying is that if you perform work for somebody else in the province of Ontario and they derive a benefit from that work, you're entitled to get paid under the Employment Standards Act. What I would have said is that unpaid internships are illegal. There's no such thing as an unpaid internship. What there is is a job that you're entitled to receive pay for. You get as much coverage under the Employment Standards Act as anybody else in the province of Ontario.

We have been out on a blitz on this. We respond to phone calls. We respond to anonymous tips. If there's anybody in the province of Ontario right now who is performing work and is not being paid, please contact the Ministry of Labour. We will enforce the act. We will ensure that these people get the coverage they deserve and need.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Speaker, there are estimates that as many as 100,000 people are working as unpaid interns in Ontario. There are too many employers who are ignoring their obligations under the Employment Standards Act or who are not aware of them. There are too many unpaid interns who are desperate for any kind of work experience and fearful of lodging a complaint.

Unpaid internships are ethically wrong, and they are bad for the economy. Will the minister commit to amending the Employment Standards Act to prevent the exploitation of unpaid internships?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you again for the supplementary question. On average, the Ministry of Labour receives about 18,000 Employment Standards Act claims per year, and we act on each and every one of them. We do the investigation. We ensure that everybody in the province of Ontario who is performing work for somebody else, where that person is receiving a benefit from that work, is covered under the Employment Standards Act.

We had a blitz that started on April 1 of this year. It was a 10-week blitz that ended in the middle of June. We expect to have the results of that available very shortly. We'll be acting on that as well. But during every single proactive inspection done in workplaces in the province of Ontario today, the issue of illegal unpaid internships was raised and investigated. It's something we're very proactive on, something we're very concerned about.

I am quite happy to work with the member on the private member's bill to ensure that whatever coverage we can give to these young people is given.

HEALTHY LIVING

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: My question is for the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care with the responsibility for long-term care and wellness.

There's no better time than the summer to go outside, to get active and to stay fit. Since healthy kids grow up to be healthy adults, it's especially important for young Ontarians to put that video game controller down or shut down the computer and get outdoors.

I have two teenagers and know only too well how difficult it is to motivate our children to make the right choices for their health. Yet thousands of Ontarians try to do just that every day, whether it's parents taking their kids to the beach or volunteers at a summer camp.

My question for the minister through you, Mr. Speaker, is, what is our government doing to help parents and communities keep kids active and healthy?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I'd like to begin by thanking the member from Kingston and the Islands for her question. Like you, I have a teenaged daughter, and I'm very concerned and motivated to ensure she grows up to have healthy habits.

1120

The fact is that the habits we get in our childhood are the ones that endure. If we want our children to grow up

to be healthy kids, we have to give them a healthy start. That's one reason our government has focused so much on our youth and on our schoolchildren.

One such fund that we have that we are continuing to invest in is the Healthy Communities Fund. This fund was established in 2009 to support grassroots, locally-driven wellness initiatives. The fund helps communities plan and deliver programs that improve the health of Ontarians, particularly high-risk and underserved populations, with a special focus on our youth.

One example is Motivate Canada's Activate Ontario youth initiative. This project trains young leaders to play an active role in improving physical activity, self-esteem and youth leadership.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you, Minister. Speaker, this sounds like exactly the initiative that will encourage kids to stay physically active. There is nothing quite like being physically active when it comes to increasing confidence and engaging our youth in their communities. I am proud to represent a university town where there are many young leaders who are looking for work in their community, so I know that young people in my riding would be interested to know more about initiatives like this.

I know that many parents like myself and yourself realize that reaching out to young people and getting our youth involved can sometimes be easier said than done. Through you, Mr. Speaker, could the minister tell this House how these initiatives are reaching out to young people?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Again, the member for Kingston and the Islands asks a very pertinent question. I'm pleased to tell her and this House that the initiatives supported through our Healthy Communities Fund have been remarkably successful at engaging our youth and young Ontarians and, indeed, people of all ages. Since 2009, the fund has provided almost \$14 million to 81 organizations to deliver health and wellness projects. More than 300,000 Ontarians have benefited from these initiatives.

To give you another example, the *Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne* youth healthy living initiative is reaching out to young Franco-Ontarians to provide education and resources to help them make better choices about healthy eating and active living.

And 8-80 Cities' Doable Neighbourhood Projects are small-scale interventions to improve the health of our young, and we will continue to invest in this.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is to the Premier. Premier, your government keeps pushing through a proposal in my riding to build eight 500-foot-tall wind turbines—that will be as tall as the TD tower here in Toronto—on the flight path of the Collingwood Regional Airport and on the flight path of the Clearview airport,

despite opposition from surrounding municipalities and despite safety warnings from the airport boards and pilots.

Collingwood airport board chair and engineer Charlie Tatham has told provincial officials that the location of the turbines poses a lethal danger. The situation is serious, in light of the crash that occurred in North Carolina where four people were killed hitting a wind turbine near the airport. If this project goes ahead, it won't be a question of if there will be deaths; it will be a question of when those deaths occur.

Premier, I ask you again: Is it still your plan to allow this project to go ahead, despite vast opposition from the community and the dangers that it will create?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I thank the member for the question. It is a serious issue and a serious consideration. But the member will know that we cannot simply unilaterally cancel an existing contract. It has a lot of repercussions to do so.

We do have a process. I will refer the supplementary to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. There are federal regulations as well that deal with airports. They are in play here. We already know that in at least one other circumstance, the federal government has required the moving of turbines because of safety concerns. There is a process for that, and I will refer that to the Minister of the Environment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is really to the Premier, and I'll address her in a moment. But I'll just say, Minister, this airport isn't registered in the same way—neither airport is, the Clearview one and the Collingwood one—as Chatham, so there are no rules.

This goes back to Chris Bentley, when he said to me that there were all kinds of rules and federal regulations and that, and I said, "No, do your homework." I guess nobody in your department is doing their homework, because the fact of the matter is there are no rules because nobody thought a government would be so stupid as to put 500-foot wind turbines on flight paths to airports.

Premier, you appeared in the riding just before you became Liberal leader. During your leadership campaign, you were interviewed and you said three things: The green energy project should not be allowed to move ahead in the face of community opposition; an airport shutdown because of wind turbines doesn't make sense; and you committed to review the situation at the Collingwood airport. It has been a year and a half since you made that commitment. What has happened with the review? We've certainly heard nothing.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: If the member was a little less confrontational and had a little more humility for his party, we could get this resolved.

Mr. Speaker, this should be, and is, a federal responsibility, and there are guidelines for airports, and the federal government—and this is not an Ontario issue, my friend; it is a national issue, because this problem has come up in other provinces with other types of structures.

The ministry is reviewing that right now. I have already met with a number of—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please.

Mr. John Yakabuski: They control the airports; you control the turbines.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And I control your voice.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to remind all members: You do not use anyone's name, other than their title or their riding. It has got to stop.

Wrap up, please.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thank you very much.

We are approaching the federal government. I am very happy to sit down after the question period with the member. If he actually wants to resolve this issue, I'm happy to work with him. If he's trying to play political football, that doesn't help this.

This is a problem that Ministers of the Environment, Ministers of Transportation, and Ministers of Energy across Canada right now are trying to work on a framework for. The federal guidelines are very soft; they're problematic; and we need—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Premier. Premier, as you should know, next Tuesday is the running of the 79th Prince of Wales Stakes at the Fort Erie Race Track.

Last year's race attracted over 10,000 spectators. This year, with 11 horses already confirmed to run in the Prince of Wales, they are expecting close to 12,000 fans from across Ontario and the United States.

I've been proud to stand here in this Legislature time and again to speak on the importance of the track to the community and the Niagara region, including St. Catharines.

Will the Premier join me on Tuesday, July 29, for the Prince of Wales Stakes to see how important the race-track is to the community and the Niagara region?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: First of all, let me just say how thrilled I am that there is racing at Fort Erie. Let me just say how pleased I am that, as we committed, there would be a race season at the track this year, and there is a racing season. We made that happen.

I want to commend the community, the community that worked hard, partnered with us and made that happen. I have less than no control over my calendar in terms of where I will be, but I really appreciate the invitation. I know how important the track is to the community, and I certainly appreciate the member extending the invitation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm guessing that that might be a no, but I will go to this, because I want to answer your question: There are 1,000 direct and indirect jobs tied to

the Fort Erie Race Track. It is a cornerstone of this community.

A few months ago, the Auditor General said that the Slots at Racetracks Program was cancelled without proper planning, without proper community consultation, and without any consideration of what this would do to tracks like Fort Erie, or the local economy.

To your response: We need to reinstate the Slots at Racetracks Program and increase the racing schedule from 37 days to at least 74, because you can't run the track and protect 1,000 jobs with 37 days.

Will the Premier sit down with the representatives from the racetrack and from the Fort Erie community and work out a plan to assure a long-term—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

1130

Hon. Jeff Leal: I'm very pleased to answer the question from the member from Niagara Falls.

Of course, we have put in place a five-year, \$500-million program to support a very important industry in rural Ontario: the horse racing industry, be it thoroughbred racing, standardbred racing or quarter horse racing.

A couple of weeks ago, I had the opportunity to meet with representatives of the horse racing industry at the Queen's Plate, which is the first leg of Canada's triple crown.

We look forward to seeing a big crowd at Fort Erie next week for the second leg of Canada's triple crown, and then the third race will be held at Woodbine later.

Mr. Speaker, I want to inform the House that this year, of course, is the 50th anniversary of Northern Dancer, perhaps Canada's most renowned racehorse, winning the Queen's Plate.

All of us celebrate the good news in Ontario's horse racing industry, as we've brought that industry back.

PENSION PLANS

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: My question is for the Associate Minister of Finance. Minister, generations of Ontarians have been well served by the Canada Pension Plan. However, for many of my constituents in Etobicoke-Lakeshore and across the province, we know that a pension gap has emerged. The time has come to close that pension gap, particularly for middle-income earners with no access to a workplace pension plan.

Last December, provincial finance ministers from across the country came together and called on the federal government to collaborate on moving forward with an enhancement to the CPP. Unfortunately, the federal government has made it clear they're not willing to take action on this issue. As a result, the Ontario government has decided to move forward with a made-in-Ontario retirement pension plan.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Can she please make it clear to this House why this government

decided to move forward with an Ontario pension plan rather than waiting for the federal government to finally come to the table on CPP enhancement?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you to the hard-working member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, who is already making such a difference in this Legislature.

Indeed, this is a serious gap. The fact of the matter is that the middle class is not saving enough for retirement.

Our objective with the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan is to build Ontario up. We know that two thirds of Ontarians don't have a workplace pension, and voluntary measures are simply not enough. CPP is not enough to survive on. The maximum benefit is \$12,500. Economist David Dodge's report shows that this is an economic imperative. The ORPP will allow for a predictable stream of income that future retirees can depend on when they need it most.

Enhancing the CPP is the preferred option, but the federal government has unilaterally blocked CPP enhancements.

Mr. Speaker, Ontarians expect leadership, and we will lead the way with the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: Thank you to the minister for her thoughtful and detailed response. I'm pleased to hear that Ontario is leading the way and moving ahead with an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. I have spoken with many of my constituents who are genuinely concerned that they will not be able to save enough for their retirement. Many of my elderly constituents are concerned about their grandchildren's future, and I'm concerned about my daughter's generation's future.

Youth in this province are more likely to be working for multiple employers throughout their lifetime, which can lead to a patchwork of workplace pension coverage or no coverage at all. If they're lucky enough to be part of that one third of Ontarians who do get access to a workplace pension plan, that still might not be enough.

That's why many of my constituents are concerned about the design and implementation of the ORPP: because they know the way it's built and implemented will also affect businesses.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Associate Minister of Finance: Can she please explain to the House how the ORPP will affect businesses?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: The ORPP is an enhancement to our economy, and it will support three million Ontarians who live on CPP alone or whatever they're able to save. It's about ensuring that everyone has a secure, stable retirement with a predictable stream of income.

Our government will provide leadership on this. We will support Ontarians in saving through a new ORPP. We will consult widely with people, including business. We're listening to businesses' concerns.

We've struck a technical advisory group that's providing input. We've sought the advice of former Prime Minister Paul Martin, and we have an implementation lead, Mr. Michael Nobrega, former CEO of OMERS.

Mr. Speaker, we will introduce the plan in 2017 to coincide with a phase-down of EI premiums. We will phase in the introductions, starting with the largest businesses first.

Mr. Speaker, this is about leadership. This is about building Ontario up and providing for those in their retirement years.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Jim McDonell: A question to the Minister of Health: My constituency office in Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry receives daily inquiries from residents who are having difficulties accessing the health services that they deserve. Some families have been registered with Health Care Connect for more than four years and are still waiting for a doctor.

Numerous constituents who require long-term-care facilities for a family member are forced to wait years to have their needs met. In fact, according to the Auditor General, they're the longest wait times in Ontario, waiting almost three years for a bed. But according to the Champlain LHIN, my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry is oversupplied with both physicians and long-term-care beds.

Minister, clearly your data does not add up. When will you get serious about meeting the needs of my constituents? For either your data is wrong, or they are doing a really bad job with this oversupply.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question from the member opposite, who may not know that we made an important commitment in our platform: a commitment to provide every Ontarian with a primary care provider.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We're almost there, but not quite.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: And we're almost there. In fact, more than 90% of Ontarians have access to a primary care provider.

I understand that, as we continue the transformation, our action plan for health care, in moving more services closer to where people need and require them—that best quality care, that timely care—and transfer more of that care into the community, whether it's home care or long-term care, which was referenced by the member opposite—we will continue to make sure that we get that balance right. At the end of the day, it's important for us to make sure we're providing that quality of care as close to home as where people need it, ensuring that it's of the highest quality.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim McDonell: Back to the Minister: Minister, the facts are clear. The LHIN has stated that we have enough long-term-care beds to meet requirements beyond 2030, by which time, according to the Auditor General, the population over 75 is projected to increase by almost 50%. He also stated that constituents in eastern Ontario are waiting up to three years for a long-term-care bed, the worst in the province.

Minister, when my constituents come into my office because they have a loved one who can't be placed in a long-term-care facility or find a local practitioner, they are insulted when your ministry says our riding is over-supplied with both physicians and long-term-care beds.

When will you address the problem and provide the health care that we are paying for and that we deserve?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We are making those investments. We're making those investments in long-term care. In fact, we've seen a decrease in the wait times for long-term care across the province specifically because we're investing more in home and community care. The member opposite, I'm sure, agrees that when appropriate, it's much better to support individuals and their families in their home or as close to home as possible. That may be a long-term-care facility, but often it isn't; it might be a residential setting, a retirement home, a home care environment. Of course, for those times when they do need a higher level of supervision and support, we provide that.

I just encourage the member opposite—we're investing in it. It is in our budget to invest more in home and community care. I would hope that the member opposite would support our budget and vote for it today, because those are the kinds of investments that we need to do precisely what the member opposite has asked us to do.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la première ministre. Two years ago, the province cancelled the Slots at Racetracks Program and announced a bold plan to build casinos. The government certainly moves fast at cancelling the slots at racetracks, like at Sudbury Downs, and we suffered immediately. The province said it would issue a request for proposal in 2012, but we're now in July 2014. There is no sign of an RFP and there certainly are no casinos.

In southern Ontario, the RFP for a casino operator must include horse racing. The Premier said that she was thrilled there was racing at Fort Erie, but in northern Ontario, there is no racing. Sudbury Downs has been cancelled, a hundred jobs have been lost, along with terrible blows to the agriculture industry.

The question is simple: Will the Premier give northern Ontario the same deal it gives southern Ontario and make sure that the casino operator in Sudbury includes horse racing?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member from Nickel Belt for this question. I did have a discussion with her earlier this week. Sudbury Downs was offered a fair deal in our negotiations with the Ontario Racing Commission as part of the overall partnership plan. For reasons unknown to me—and there was a question with regard to horse supply for Sudbury Downs. I did indicate to the member that we would take a second look at Sudbury Downs in terms of the 2015 racing season.

I did take the opportunity to talk to John Snobelen, along with John Wilkinson and Elmer Buchanan. We've put in place the five-year \$500-million plan for horse racing in Ontario. We've moved ahead with that file, and I'll certainly get back to the member with regard to Sudbury Downs.

DEFERRED VOTES

BUILDING OPPORTUNITY AND SECURING OUR FUTURE ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2014

LOI DE 2014 OUVRANT DES PERSPECTIVES ET ASSURANT NOTRE AVENIR (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 14, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts / *Projet de loi 14, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1141 to 1146.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Would all members take their seats, please. Could be close. All members take their seats, please.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Last chance, folks. The last chance.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): See what you've done? See what you've done?

On July 23, Mr. Naqvi moved third reading of Bill 14. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Meilleur, Madeleine
Anderson, Granville	Fraser, John	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Baker, Yvan	Gravelle, Michael	Moridi, Reza
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoskins, Eric	Murray, Glen R.
Ballard, Chris	Hunter, Mitzie	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jaczek, Helena	Naqvi, Yasir
Bradley, James J.	Kiwala, Sophie	Oraziotti, David
Chan, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Potts, Arthur
Chiarelli, Bob	Lalonde, Marie-France	Qaadri, Shafiq
Colle, Mike	Leal, Jeff	Rinaldi, Lou
Coteau, Michael	MacCharles, Tracy	Sandals, Liz
Crack, Grant	Malhi, Harinder	Sergio, Mario
Damerla, Dipika	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Del Duca, Steven	Martins, Cristina	Takhar, Harinder S.
Delaney, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
Dhillon, Vic	Mauro, Bill	Wong, Soo
Dickson, Joe	McGarry, Kathryn	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dong, Han	McMahon, Eleanor	Zimmer, David
Duguid, Brad	McMeekin, Ted	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.
 Arnott, Ted
 Bailey, Robert
 Barrett, Toby
 Bisson, Gilles
 Campbell, Sarah
 Clark, Steve
 Elliott, Christine
 Fedeli, Victor
 Forster, Cindy
 French, Jennifer K.
 Gates, Wayne
 Gélinas, France

Gretzky, Lisa
 Hardeman, Ernie
 Harris, Michael
 Hatfield, Percy
 Horwath, Andrea
 Hudak, Tim
 Jones, Sylvia
 MacLeod, Lisa
 Martow, Gila
 McDonnell, Jim
 McNaughton, Monte
 Miller, Norm
 Miller, Paul

Munro, Julia
 Sattler, Peggy
 Scott, Laurie
 Singh, Jagmeet
 Smith, Todd
 Tabuns, Peter
 Taylor, Monique
 Vanthof, John
 Wilson, Jim
 Yakabuski, John
 Yurek, Jeff

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you today my partner, Chris Van der Vyver, who's in the members' gallery, and my daughter Linnaea Kiwala. I'm absolutely delighted that they're here with us today. Thank you so much for coming.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

EAST OXFORD AGRICULTURE
HALL OF FAME

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: On Canada Day, four people had their contributions to our country's agricultural industry recognized as they became the inaugural members of the East Oxford Agriculture Hall of Fame.

Today, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to recognize them again. The recipients were: Charles Gracey, Don Lazenby, Erle Kitchen and Ross Butler.

Charles Gracey was inducted into the Canadian Agricultural Hall of Fame in 2001. He was the driving force behind the creation of a check-off on cattle marketing in Ontario which became the model for other provinces to follow.

Don Lazenby is recognized for his contribution to dairy herd management and for guiding innovation and systems development for the dairy industry. He also organized a program to expose Oxford county students to the dairy industry.

The late Erle Kitchen was a Holstein breeder and author of many of the policies of Canada's dairy organization. He was also known across the country for his contributions to government policies.

In addition to being a farmer, Ross Butler created the "true type" drawings of animals that were used in schools and are now known worldwide. I'm proud to have two of his prints in my office upstairs.

I also want to recognize Bill Hampson, a fourth-generation farmer who was the creator and driving force behind the East Oxford Agriculture Hall of Fame. Tragically, he passed away too soon to see his idea completed, but it will always be part of his legacy.

In planning for the event, Bill said, "Canada Day was the fitting time to recognize these people who made such great contributions to our country's agriculture sector." On behalf of the people of Oxford, I want to say that I agree with Bill Hampson.

VIOLA PILKEY

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I would like to take this opportunity to speak about Viola Pilkey on her 90th birthday. Vi is a woman who has been contributing to Oshawa's story for years. She's a trailblazer and a pillar in our community with deep roots in politics, the NDP and women's initiatives, charity work and social justice.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 56; the nays are 37.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Brampton West on a point of order.

Mr. Vic Dhillon: We have some special little people visiting here: my kids, Saajan, Robin and Taj, and as well, my niece and nephew, who are visiting from India, Ikroop and Daman Rao.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just before I make this proclamation, I want to thank all members. Again, I'm not making assumptions, but if there are assumptions to be made, I wish all of you a safe and happy summer with your families.

Also, know that I know, and we all know, that you work very hard in your constituency offices during the times in which the House is not sitting. I wish you safety with you and your families.

There are no further votes.

This House stands adjourned until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1151 to 1300.

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Administrator has been pleased to assent to a certain bill in her office.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The following is the title of the bill to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts / Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

Viola moved to Oshawa in 1924 and has spent her life being a part of the city and its journey ever since. She has always kept pace with the people and the politics—maybe it is fairer to say or that the people and politics have had to keep pace with Vi Pilkey.

Always active in her community, it was in politics that Vi shone the brightest. Though she never held office herself, she quarterbacked the campaigns of her husband, Cliff Pilkey, as alderman and MPP for Oshawa, as well as her son Allan, who was elected as alderman, mayor of Oshawa and, later, as MPP.

In 1968, Vi played one of the largest roles in Ed Broadbent's breakthrough win. In a span of one year, she steered her husband's win, her son's win and Ed Broadbent's win. Regardless of political stripe, that is a remarkable achievement.

Vi received Oshawa's Community Legends award in 2013 for her active volunteer work with many community and labour organizations, charities and political campaigns.

Personally, I cannot thank Vi enough for her enthusiasm and investment during my campaign. I appreciated the invaluable opportunity to draw from her experience and passion. Thank you, Vi.

Happy 90th birthday, Viola, from the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and from your beloved community of Oshawa.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): There are some heavy conversations going on around this side. Can we keep it a little quiet?

Members' statements?

LOYAL KIGABIRO

M^{me} Marie-France Lalonde: La circonscription d'Ottawa-Orléans que je suis très fière de représenter depuis le 12 juin dernier est une communauté active où la diversité culturelle et linguistique est omniprésente et vit en parfaite harmonie.

J'aimerais reconnaître et saluer aujourd'hui devant cette Chambre l'initiative de Loyal Kigabiro et de son président. Les Tambours sacrés du Burundi au Canada, en abrégé Loyal Kigabiro, est un groupe de tambour sacré du Burundi à vocation pédagogique. Il initie et instruit toute personne désireuse de faire sien l'art des Batimbo du Burundi.

Je participais justement samedi dernier à un spectacle de levée de fonds tout particulier afin de venir en aide aux sanctuaires des Batimbo traditionnels du Burundi.

Les tambours sont sculptés à partir d'un arbre nommé *Cordia africana* et sont couverts par la peau de vache.

J'aimerais remercier l'entraîneur, M. Patrice Ntatiforo, pour l'extraordinaire spectacle qu'il a offert avec ses élèves.

Je suis très heureuse de souligner comment la communauté du Burundi à Orléans est active et je salue

leurs efforts constants afin de sensibiliser et de promouvoir la culture du Burundi en Ontario et au Canada.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

Mr. Steve Clark: I rise on behalf of recreational vehicle enthusiasts in Leeds–Grenville and in rural communities across Ontario.

Last November, this House unanimously passed a motion to amend regulation 316/03 under the Highway Traffic Act. MPPs from all parties spoke strongly in favour of updating the act to allow side-by-side off-road vehicles, four-seat side-by-side vehicles and two-up vehicles on our roadways under the same conditions as other ATVs. This would treat all ATVs equally, giving owners the same opportunity to explore our great province.

It was interesting that the current Minister of Transportation was among those who spoke in support. So on behalf of the Thousand Islands ATV Club, the Johnstown ATV Club and other clubs throughout Leeds–Grenville and the province of Ontario, I'm calling on the minister to act on this issue. There is no need for a rerun of that debate. He can make all these amendments, which have the support of MPPs, municipal leaders, businesses, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, and ATV enthusiasts.

In the lead-up to the debate last November, I was inundated with letters, emails and phone calls from ATV clubs and riders throughout my riding. They spoke about safety enhancements to these ATVs, and said it's time the Highway Traffic Act caught up with the times.

They also mentioned that this is a great opportunity to give the tourism economy in rural Ontario a much-needed boost. I agree, and we all need to make it happen.

I appreciate the minister's supportive words that he put into place last year. Let's just move forward.

ENERGY CONTRACT

Mr. John Vanthof: In 2010, under the green energy FIT program, a contract was awarded to Canadian Solar to build three 10-megawatt solar farms in the city of Temiskaming Shores. The community was fully in support of the project, and as construction began, it was announced that TransCanada Energy would purchase the facilities on completion. Since residents of our region have a long-standing relationship with TransCanada PipeLines, they were further encouraged by this development. A contract from the OPA, reputable public companies—what could go wrong?

Although the contract was granted to Canadian Solar, the actual construction was subcontracted to ABB, who then hired Clarida Construction, who then employed local companies to do the actual work. When Clarida failed to pay the local contractors, the project touted as an economic boom turned into a nightmare. ABB replaced Clarida but refused to honour invoices for previous work.

The new company was soon replaced by another, with more unpaid bills.

I wrote a letter to the Minister of Energy on February 4 advising him of the situation and asked for his assistance. He replied on April 3, directing my constituents to consider legal advice.

During the election campaign, my Liberal opponent also wrote the Minister of Energy: "I am respectfully requesting that you issue a directive to the OPA to halt this project until Canadian Solar, its general contractor ABB and their subcontractors, and the Temiskaming Shores businesses come to a resolution of the outstanding amount owing to this date ... of \$21.3 million...."

Since the Minister of Energy won't act, I'm asking the Premier to step in and save these family-owned businesses.

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TANNER PEARSON

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I think it's safe to say that every hockey player dreams of winning the Stanley Cup and bringing it home to celebrate in their community. Now, not many get a chance, but happily, last weekend, a Kitchener native had the opportunity to do just that.

This past Sunday, to the delight of hockey fans across Waterloo region, LA Kings forward Tanner Pearson brought the Stanley Cup home to Kitchener.

Applause.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Yes.

Thousands of fans lined up at Kitchener city hall for a chance to get their picture taken with Pearson and the venerable cup. No one wanted to miss this. After all, for those of you who are Leafs fans, you can appreciate how rare it is to be able to celebrate with the Stanley Cup.

Mr. Pearson was a first-round pick of the LA Kings in 2012. He grew up playing minor league hockey in Waterloo region before being drafted. He played for the Waterloo Siskins and the Barrie Colts. He also had the opportunity to represent Canada at the 2012 World Junior Championship.

We are immensely proud of Mr. Pearson, and we wish him all the best in his NHL career. Hopefully, he'll be able to bring the cup back to Kitchener again in the not-too-distant future.

COLLINGWOOD ELVIS FESTIVAL

Mr. Jim Wilson: Mr. Speaker, Elvis has not left the building. In fact, this weekend, he will be in Collingwood, where Elvis from around the world will gather for the 2014 Collingwood Elvis Festival.

This festival attracts hundreds of thousands of Elvis Presley fans to my riding each year for a fun-filled weekend of music, competition, tribute performances and family attractions. The full schedule of events can be found at collingwoodelvisfestival.com, the events web page,

This year in particular is a special year for the festival as they will be celebrating their 20th anniversary. In tribute to this milestone, the festival is thrilled to be welcoming special guest Priscilla Presley.

Famous in her own right as a well-known actress and businesswoman, Priscilla has a new book, entitled *Shades of Elvis*, that she will be promoting throughout the festival. It showcases photographs of celebrities wearing Elvis's iconic sunglasses.

Priscilla will be joined by her co-author, Christopher Ameruso, for a photo and autograph session on Saturday at the Collingwood library.

As a big Elvis fan, I am all shook up about meeting Priscilla and enjoying all the festival has to offer.

I invite all members of this Legislature to visit my riding this weekend to enjoy all that the festival has to offer and to pay tribute to the great King of Rock and Roll. It's a wonderful event and I think you'd all enjoy it thoroughly.

Thank you, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

EVENTS IN KINGSTON AND THE ISLANDS

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I rise today to tell you about two amazingly creative fundraising events in Kingston and the Islands.

Firstly, Princess Animal Hospital donates all the money that it receives for dog and cat nail trims back to the community. Yes, making money from animal nail clippings is possible in Kingston. The last donation of \$745 was just presented to the Kingston Grandmother Connection, a charity that I volunteer with, which in turn was donated to the Stephen Lewis Foundation for their work with HIV/AIDS orphans in Africa. Doctors Latimer, Ouellet and Caudle are to be commended for their commitment and generosity towards local charities.

Secondly, last weekend in front of city hall—Canada's first Parliament—I participated in the second annual Pull Together for Epilepsy Fire Truck Pull, and, no, I didn't pull it with my teeth. Conceived by Susan Harrison, the executive director, and superbly organized by staff and volunteers from the Epilepsy and Seizure Disorder Resource Centre, nine teams pulled a fully loaded fire truck 100 feet against the clock. The whole event would not be possible without the dedication and volunteer work of the Kingston Fire and Rescue, which placed first and third.

At that event, we raised more than \$9,500 to assist 300 people with epilepsy in our community.

Needless to say, my team, comprised of local politicians and honourables came in—can you guess?—last. We could have used your help, Mr. Speaker.

MILL RACE FESTIVAL OF TRADITIONAL FOLK MUSIC

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I invite all members to grab your dancing shoes and a friend and come to visit my

unique riding of Cambridge on August 1, 2 and 3. The city will be again hosting the Mill Race Festival of Traditional Folk Music, now in its 22nd year. It's the result of the vision of Brad McEwen, a local musician who has worked tirelessly for its continued success.

The festival includes a wide variety of folk music and dancing from across Ontario, Quebec and the United Kingdom. The legacy of a long tradition of British folk music is combined with the multicultural and multi-national features of this country to create an event that is quintessentially Canadian.

The folk festival is structured in the vein of a traditional European festival. Musicians will be performing on various stages and areas in the historic downtown core alongside the Grand River.

There will be a wide array of arts, crafts and foods on offer throughout the venues, which, coupled with the superb music and dance, is sure to create an atmosphere of celebration and excitement.

Some events will take place at the breathtaking Mill Race amphitheatre, an outdoor performance space which encompasses the stone ruins of a textile mill overlooking the Grand River, another seamless and beautiful blending of old and new, tradition and innovation.

The Mill Race Festival is a great chance for folks from all around and in Cambridge to enjoy a unique and unifying celebration.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

BRUNO'S ALIGNMENT LIMITED ACT, 2014

Mme Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr4, An Act to revive Bruno's Alignment Limited.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

TAXATION AMENDMENT ACT, 2014 LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES IMPÔTS

Mr. Sousa moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 26, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 /
Projet de loi 26, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Does the minister have a brief statement?

Hon. Charles Sousa: No statement, Mr. Speaker.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): On a point of order, the government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007, that has been introduced just now.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Naqvi seeks unanimous consent to move a motion. Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I move that the orders for second and third reading of this bill shall immediately be called consecutively; and

The Speaker shall put the question on the motions for second and third reading of the bill immediately, without debate or amendment, no deferral of either vote being permitted; and

In the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Naqvi has moved that the orders for second and third reading of—

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Dispense.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Dispense? Agreed? Agreed.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

TAXATION AMENDMENT ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES IMPÔTS

Mr. Sousa moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill 26, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 /
Projet de loi 26, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Shall the motion carry? Carried.

Mr. Steve Clark: On division.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): On division.

Second reading agreed to.

TAXATION AMENDMENT ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES IMPÔTS

Mr. Sousa moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill 26, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 /
Projet de loi 26, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr. Steve Clark: On division.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): On division.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Orders of the day.

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the Standing Committee on Estimates.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Naqvi has moved a motion seeking unanimous consent. Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Estimates, the House leaders of the recognized parties shall conduct a process of estimates selection provided for in standing order 60, and shall submit the resulting list of selections in writing to the Clerk of the Committee no later than Friday, September 12, 2014, at 5 p.m.; and

That, notwithstanding the order of the House dated July 16, 2014, or any standing order, the Standing Committee on Estimates be authorized to meet for the purpose of organization and to consider estimates as follows: Tuesday, September 30; Tuesday, October 7; and Tuesday, October 14 from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and Wednesday, October 1; Wednesday, October 8; and Wednesday, October 15, 2014, from 9 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.; and

That, notwithstanding standing order 63(a), the Standing Committee on Estimates shall present one report with respect to all of the estimates and supplementary estimates considered pursuant to standing orders 60 and 62, no later than November 27, 2014; and

That all other sections of standing order 63 shall apply to the November 27, 2014, reporting date; and

That, notwithstanding standing order 60(c), the estimates of the ministries and offices shall be considered in the following order: those ministries and offices selected by the members of the party forming the official opposition, followed by those ministries and offices selected by the members of the party having the third-largest membership in the House, followed by those ministries and offices selected by the members of the party forming the government.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Naqvi has moved—

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Dispense.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Dispense? Agreed? Agreed.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

FIREARMS CONTROL

Mr. Mike Colle: I'd like to introduce a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas current federal laws are not a strong enough deterrent to stop criminals from driving around with unlawful handguns in their cars;

"Whereas in recent years there have been a number of innocent people shot and killed by unlawful handguns carried in cars despite the hard work of our local police;

"Whereas unlawful handguns in cars, drive-by shootings, and gun crimes are threatening innocent citizens and our police officers on duty;

"Whereas the constant flow of illegal smuggled guns into the hands of street criminals continues;

"Whereas only police officers, military personnel, and lawfully licensed persons are the only people allowed to possess handguns;

"Whereas Bill 24 would help police take these gunmen off our streets and make our communities safer;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 24."

I fully support this petition and I hand it to our page Stephanie.

CREDIT UNIONS

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario's economy and create jobs in three ways:

"—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

"—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

"—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries."

I attach my name to this and I give it to page Emma.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

"Whereas there are an estimated 100,000 to 300,000 unpaid internships in Canada each year; and

"Whereas youth unemployment in Ontario is over 15%; and

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Labour is not adequately enforcing the laws on unpaid internships;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take the following actions:

"(1) Proactively enforce the law on unpaid internships;

"(2) Engage in an educational campaign to inform students, youth, employers, educational institutions and the general public of the laws surrounding unpaid internships; and

"(3) Undertake a comprehensive review of the current laws surrounding unpaid internships in Ontario."

I fully support this petition, affix my name to it and will give it to page David to take to the table.

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that was collected by Royce Simpson from Lively, Ontario, in my riding, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline;

"Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

"Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of ... price regulation; and

"Whereas jurisdictions with ... price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices;

"We ... petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario" to "mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it, et je demande à mon page Gabriel de vous l'apporter.

CREDIT UNIONS

Mr. Wayne Gates: "Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering"—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order.

Mr. Wayne Gates: "Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario's economy and create jobs in three ways:

"—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

"—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

"—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries."

I support the petition. I sign my name to it and give it to page Hayden.

CREDIT UNIONS

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario's economy and create jobs in three ways:

"—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

"—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

"—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries."

I support this petition, sign my name to it and give it to page David.

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the House schedule.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Naqvi seeks unanimous consent to put forward a motion respecting the House calendar. Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn until October 20, 2014.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Naqvi has moved that the House adjourn until October 20, 2014. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order.

Carried on division.

Motion agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): This House stands adjourned until October 20, 2014. I wish all of you a happy summer.

The House adjourned at 1333.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Samia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiles, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Cimino, Joe (NDP)	Sudbury	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton–Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
		Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
		Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brook	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
		Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
		Premier / Première ministre
		Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement
		Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Vacant
Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard
Grant Crack, Han Dong
Cindy Forster, Michael Harris
Randy Hillier, Sophie Kiwala
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Présidente: Soo Wong
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Z. Milczyn
Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker
Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife
Ann Hoggarth, Monte McNaughton
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala
Eleanor McMahon, Lisa M. Thompson
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vic Dhillon, John Fraser
Wayne Gates, Marie-France Lalonde
Harinder Malhi, Cristina Martins
Jim McDonnell, Randy Pettapiece
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Vacant
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Bob Delaney, Jack MacLaren
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

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permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Chris Ballard, Toby Barrett
Garfield Dunlop, Eleanor McMahon
Laurie Scott, Jagmeet Singh
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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des comptes publics**

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Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Vacant
Robert Bailey, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Jennifer K. French, Monte Kwinter
Amrit Mangat, Kathryn McGarry
Indira Naidoo-Harris, Daiene Vernile
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Vacant
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon
Christine Elliott, France Gélinas
Marie-France Lalonde, Amrit Mangat
Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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